NATION&WORLD EXTRA

INSIDE

Pfizer must face lawsuit over diversity program, court rules, **3NN**

LOS ANGELES WILDFIRES

An air tanker drops fire retardant at the Palisades Fire, one of simultaneous blazes that have ripped across Los Angeles County, as seen from Woodland Hills, neighborhood of Los Angeles. RINGO CHIU/REUTERS

Fires trigger health concerns

Experts warn of long-term impacts from smoke inhalation

Alison Withers, Dawn Chmielewski, Andrew Hay and Hannah Lang
REUTERS

LOS ANGELES – Business was brisk at Teddy's Cocina in Pasadena as wildfire evacuees ate lunch and passersby ducked indoors to escape from the brown, smoky air blanketing the city.

"It's not breathable," said Dulce Perez, a cook at the restaurant, as an eye-watering haze hung overhead on Thursday about two miles away from one of the multiple fires burning around Los Angeles. "We just try to stay indoors."

Last week, as the wildfires raged and smoke billowed across Los Angeles, officials issued air quality alerts, schools canceled classes and scientists warned about the dangerous – even fatal – consequences of wildfire smoke.

All around the United States' second-largest city, residents worried about air that has, at times, turned lung-burning from the ash, soot

See WILDFIRES, Page 5NN

A firefighter extinguishes hotspots in the remains of a home destroyed in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood in Los Angeles. DAVID RYDER/REUTERS

"If you're working harder to breathe and your body is being challenged that way, it can also put a strain on the heart. And that's why you see an increase in heart attacks."

Dr. Afif El-Hasan
Spokesperson for the American Lung Association

Wildfires spark anxiety among victims over insurance

Joe Brock and Chad Terhune
REUTERS

ALTADENA, Calif. – As Los Angeles construction worker Ivan De La Torre surveyed a landscape of smoking wreckage in fire-ravaged Altadena, a question nagged at him: how would insurance companies cover the cost of rebuilding an entire neighborhood?

As hundreds of Los Angeles residents return to find homes reduced to ashes due to a devastating wave of wildfires, many are fearful that their insurance policies may not cover the rebuild cost and that future premiums will be astronomical.

"My concern is that the insurance companies won't be able to handle all the claims and file for bankruptcy and that's that. It's scary," said De La Torre, 32, whose uncle and sister both lost their houses in a fire that consumed half of Altadena, a suburb north of Los Angeles of some 40,000 people.

Leo Frank III, a 66-year-old actor who lost his family home in Altadena, said he fears insurers could drag their feet on paying claims and fail to cover the full cost of reconstruction.

"We will rebuild. No one is taking our house," said Frank, as he hunted for a shower seat for his 96-year-old mother in a parking lot

See INSURANCE, Page 4NN

2024 the world's hottest year, scientists say

Political will to curb emissions wanes despite rising climate disasters

Kate Abnett and Alison Withers
REUTERS

BRUSSELS – Global temperatures in 2024 exceeded 1.5 Celsius above the pre-industrial era for the first time, bringing the world closer to breaching the pledge governments made under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, scientists said on Friday.

The World Meteorological Organization confirmed the 1.5C breach, after reviewing data from U.S., U.K., Japan and EU scientists.

"Global heating is a cold, hard fact," United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement. "There's still time to avoid the worst of climate catastrophe. But leaders must act – now."

The bleak assessment came as wildfires charged by fierce winds

swept through Los Angeles last week. Wildfires are among the many disasters that climate change is making more frequent and severe.

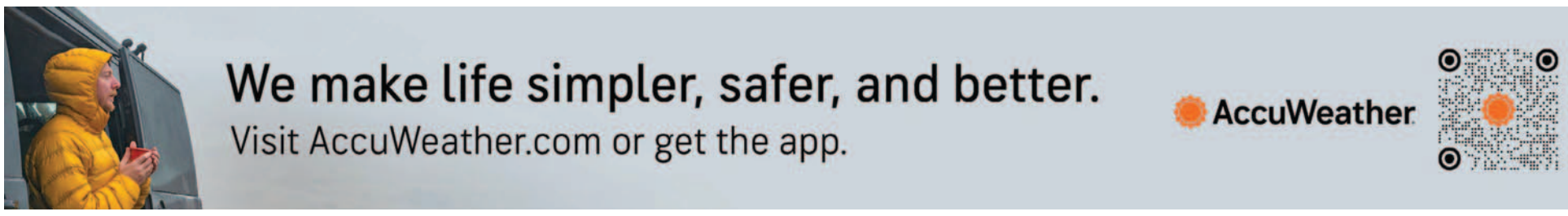
The European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said climate change was pushing the planet's temperature to levels never before experienced by modern humans. Scientists have linked climate change to greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from burning fossil fuels.

The planet's average temperature in 2024 was 1.6 degrees Celsius higher than in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period, C3S said. The last 10 years are the 10 hottest years on record, the WMO said.

Climate change is worsening storms

See CLIMATE, Page 4NN

Hippos stuck in a dried up channel near the Nxaraga village in the Okavango Delta on the outskirts of Maun, India. Last year is confirmed by the Copernicus Climate Change Service to be the warmest year on record globally. MONIRUL BHUIYAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

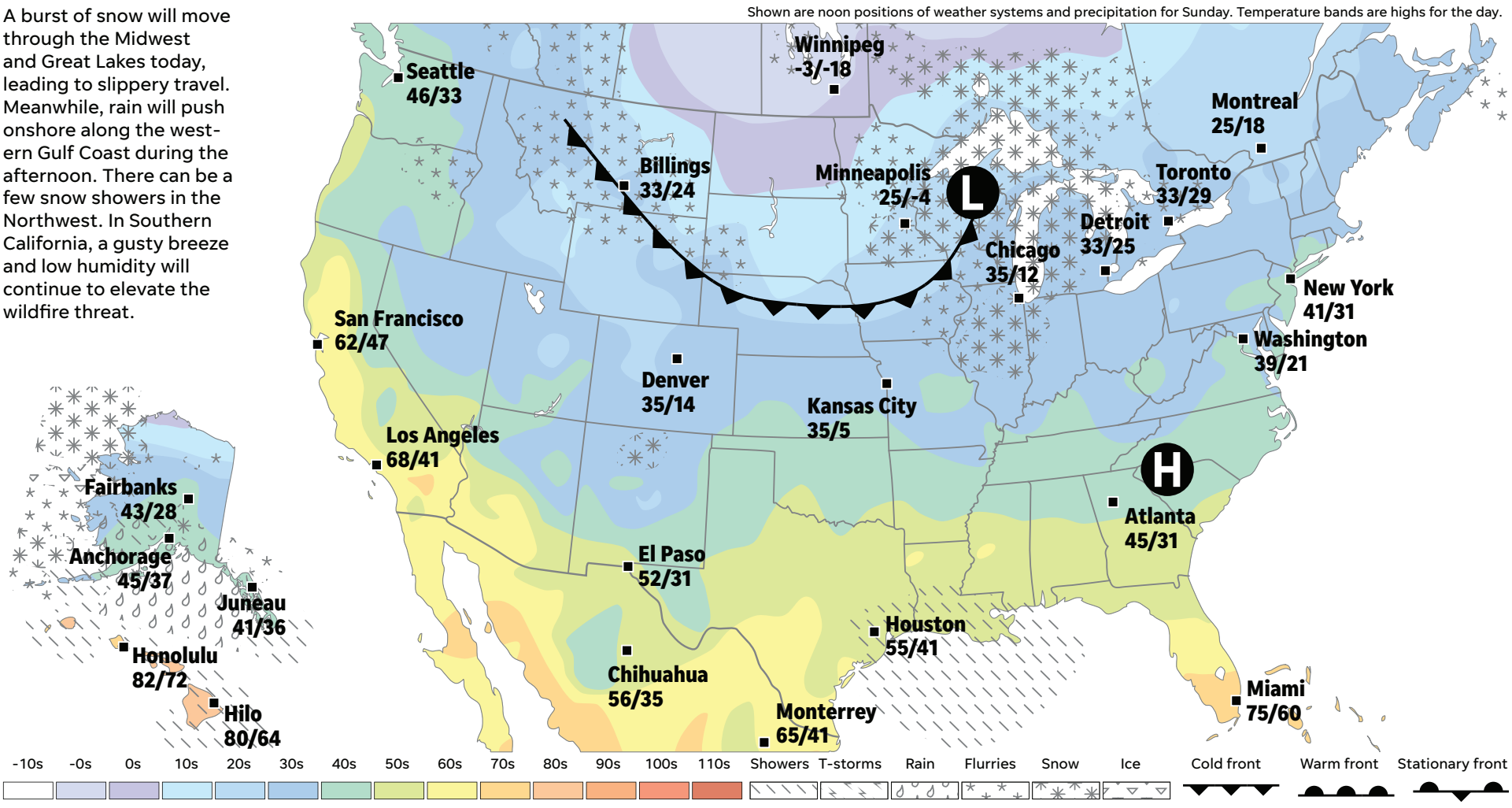


NATIONAL SUMMARY

A burst of snow will move through the Midwest and Great Lakes today, leading to slippery travel. Meanwhile, rain will push onshore along the western Gulf Coast during the afternoon. There can be a few snow showers in the Northwest. In Southern California, a gusty breeze and low humidity will continue to elevate the wildfire threat.

In the digital e-edition, you can click anywhere on the US map to get up-to-date forecasts, radar, MinuteCast® and more.

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation for Sunday. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



SATURDAY EXTREMES

NATIONAL (for the 48 contiguous states)

High:	**80** at Homestead, FL
Low:	**-10** at Cabin Creek, CO
Precip:	**0.73"** at Hatteras, NC

INTERNATIONAL (excludes Antarctica)

High:	**116** at Urandangi, Australia
Low:	**-61** at Delyankir, Russia
Precip:	**4.69"** at Skukuza, South Africa

TODAY IN HISTORY

A cold snap in the Pacific Northwest spread eastward on Jan. 12, 1888, spawning the "Blizzard of '88." The storm affected an area from northern Texas to the Dakotas and killed 200 people.

WEATHER TRIVIA™

Q: What is the common phrase for a mild spell in January?

A: The January thaw

NATIONAL CITIES SUNDAY

● Denotes possible travel delays

	High/low/W	Air Quality
Aberdeen, SD	12/-5/pc	27
Abilene, TX	52/26/s	24
Accomac, VA	37/20/s	46
● Adrian, MI	33/24/sn	45
● Akron, OH	31/27/pc	47
Alamogordo, NM	46/21/s	34
Alexandria, VA	40/15/s	53
● Alliance, OH	32/27/c	45
Amarillo, TX	40/20/s	27
● Ames, IA	30/6/c	19
Anderson, SC	43/25/s	51
● Appleton, WI	33/5/sn	30
Asheville, NC	41/21/s	51
Ashland, OH	32/25/pc	50
Athens, GA	44/27/s	53
Augusta, GA	48/27/s	59
Austin, TX	60/36/s	26
Bartlesville, OK	43/14/s	26
● Battle Creek, MI	32/21/sn	27
Bedford, IN	36/20/s	35
Binghamton, NY	30/23/c	37
Bluffton, SC	50/36/s	53
Bremerton, WA	44/31/pc	50
Brockton, MA	37/23/s	53
Brownwood, TX	56/28/s	30
● Burlington, IA	35/10/sn	38
Burlington, NC	42/22/s	52
Burlington, VT	29/17/c	47
Cambridge, OH	36/29/pc	29
Camdenton, MO	40/12/pc	32
Canandaigua, NY	33/27/sf	43
● Canton, OH	32/28/pc	52
Carlsbad, NM	46/27/s	44
Chambersburg, PA	37/19/s	52
Cherry Hill, NJ	41/26/s	57
Cincinnati, OH	37/24/pc	35
Clarksville, TN	44/26/s	36
● Coldwater, MI	32/22/sn	33
Columbus, OH	34/26/pc	71
Corning, NY	35/22/c	40
Corpus Christi, TX	61/42/s	33
Daytona Beach, FL	60/45/s	50
Deming, NM	48/24/s	39
● DeRidder, LA	52/40/pc	31
● Des Moines, IA	31/7/c	20
● Detroit, MI	33/25/sn	54
Devils Lake, ND	-1/-19/c	28
Dover, NH	36/19/s	45
El Paso, TX	52/31/s	47
Elmira, NY	35/23/c	38
● Erie, PA	32/28/c	46
Eugene, OR	49/33/pc	41
Evansville, IN	39/20/s	38
Fall River, MA	39/26/s	53
Farmington, NM	39/16/s	37
Fayetteville, NC	46/26/s	53
● Fond du Lac, WI	34/6/sn	30
Fort Myers, FL	72/54/pc	50
Fort Smith, AR	44/22/s	40
Framingham, MA	39/22/s	51
● Freeport, IL	33/8/sn	29
● Fremont, OH	34/25/sf	47
Fort Collins, CO	38/12/s	46
Gadsden, AL	45/27/s	45
Gainesville, FL	59/41/pc	51
● Galesburg, IL	35/9/sn	36
Gastonia, NC	45/23/s	52
Glen Rose, TX	55/29/s	36
● Gonzales, LA	57/48/sh	39
Great Falls, MT	30/20/sf	40
● Green Bay, WI	33/6/sn	29
Greenville, SC	43/24/s	51
Hackensack, NJ	43/29/s	51
Hagerstown, MD	37/22/s	52
Hattiesburg, MS	57/45/s	40
Henderson, KY	39/21/s	37
Hendersonville, NC	41/19/s	51
Herkimer, NY	32/21/sf	33
● Hillsdale, MI	31/22/sn	36
● Holland, MI	35/20/sn	29
Hornell, NY	33/25/c	40
● Houma, LA	58/50/r	30
● Howell, MI	33/25/sn	36
Hutchinson, KS	35/3/s	34
Hyannis, MA	36/26/pc	43
● Indianapolis, IN	35/15/pc	32
Iowa City, IA	34/7/sn	34
Ithaca, NY	32/24/sf	34
Jackson, MS	58/42/s	39
Jackson, TN	45/29/s	38
Jacksonville, FL	57/39/s	51
Jacksonville, NC	46/24/s	52
● Kent, OH	32/28/c	49
● Kewanee, IL	34/9/sn	38
Keyser, WV	39/23/s	51
Kinston, NC	44/25/s	53
Knoxville, TN	41/27/s	44
● Lafayette, IN	33/11/sn	31
● Lafayette, LA	56/49/r	35
Lakeland, FL	64/49/pc	51
● Lansing, MI	32/21/sn	29
Las Cruces, NM	47/25/s	40
Lebanon, PA	38/21/pc	51
Leesburg, FL	63/48/pc	50
Levittown, PA	41/25/s	51
● Lincoln, IL	35/12/sn	34
Louisville, KY	41/27/s	44
Lubbock, TX	46/23/pc	30
● Manitowoc, WI	34/8/sn	29
● Mansfield, OH	31/22/pc	37
Marshall, NC	43/17/s	46
● Marshfield, WI	28/-3/sn	31
● Massillon, OH	33/29/pc	54
McLean, VA	39/12/s	53
Melbourne, FL	63/47/pc	41
Memphis, TN	44/29/s	46
Middletown, NY	38/22/pc	37
Milford, MA	39/24/s	51
● Milwaukee, WI	36/9/sn	41
● Monroe, MI	34/26/sn	50
Monroe, LA	59/38/s	34
Montgomery, AL	54/39/s	43
● Muncie, IN	34/16/pc	32
Murfreesboro, TN	44/25/s	44
Naples, FL	71/55/pc	47
Nashville, TN	43/31/s	46
Neptune, NJ	42/28/s	47
New Bedford, MA	39/21/s	47
New Bern, NC	47/24/s	52
New Philadelphia, OH	34/28/pc	44
Newark, OH	36/28/pc	58
Newton, NJ	39/23/pc	43
New York, NY	41/31/s	54
Norwich, CT	39/22/s	41
Ocala, FL	61/43/pc	50
Oklahoma City, OK	41/20/s	25
● Opelousas, LA	53/44/sh	35
● Oshkosh, WI	33/5/sn	29
Palm Beach, FL	70/61/pc	43
Palm Springs, CA	70/42/s	59
Panama City, FL	56/45/pc	41
● Pekin, IL	36/10/sn	34
Pensacola, FL	55/47/pc	42
● Peoria, IL	35/10/sn	35
Petersburg, VA	42/21/s	53
Phoenix, AZ	64/38/s	62
● Port Huron, MI	32/26/sn	42
Portsmouth, NH	37/22/s	29
Poughkeepsie, NY	40/23/pc	41
Providence, RI	38/25/s	51
Pueblo, CO	37/13/s	42
Quincy, MA	37/26/s	52
● Redding, CA	63/48/s	44
Reno, NV	40/21/s	53
● Ravenna, OH	31/27/c	47
● Richmond, IN	34/19/pc	47
Rochester, NY	35/29/sf	40
● Rockford, IL	35/8/sn	31
Ruidoso, NM	32/14/sn	36
Salem, OR	49/31/pc	50
Salina, KS	34/3/s	38
Salinas, CA	64/36/s	52
Salisbury, MD	39/19/s	44
San Angelo, TX	54/29/s	34
Sarasota, FL	64/53/pc	51
Savannah, GA	54/32/s	54
● Sheboygan, WI	34/8/sn	30
Shelby, NC	42/22/s	51
Sherman, TX	47/25/s	30
Shreveport, LA	59/36/s	32
Silver City, NM	43/21/s	36
● Sioux Falls, SD	20/4/c	28
Somerset, PA	30/21/pc	51
Somerville, NJ	42/24/s	49
● South Bend, IN	33/17/sn	50
Spartanburg, SC	45/23/s	51
● Springfield, IL	36/12/sn	39
Springfield, MO	39/13/pc	34
St. Augustine, FL	55/42/s	49
● St. Cloud, MN	22/-7/sn	20
St. George, UT	47/24/s	43
Staunton, VA	36/15/s	50
● Stevens Point, WI	30/1/sn	33
Stockton, CA	61/33/s	52
Stroudsburg, PA	39/22/pc	47
Stuart, FL	67/54/pc	50
● Sturgis, MI	32/20/sn	51
Tallahassee, FL	57/41/pc	51
● Thibodaux, LA	56/49/r	35
Topeka, KS	35/2/pc	32
Tuscaloosa, AL	53/37/s	44
Utica, NY	30/22/sf	28
Ventura, CA	64/49/s	54
Victorville, CA	54/25/s	51
Vineland, NJ	41/21/s	53
Visalia, CA	59/29/s	75
Washington, DC	39/21/s	51
Watertown, SD	14/-4/c	27
● Wausau, WI	29/-1/sn	31
Waynesboro, PA	37/20/s	51
White Plains, NY	39/25/pc	41
Wichita Falls, TX	51/22/s	31
Wilmington, DE	39/23/s	59
Wilmington, NC	49/26/s	52
● Wisconsin Rapids, WI	30/-2/sn	34
● Wooster, OH	32/27/pc	43
Worcester, MA	35/24/s	35
York, PA	38/20/pc	52

Air Quality Index: 0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-150, Unhealthy for sensitive groups; 151-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

	Sunday High/low/W	Monday High/low/W
Acapulco	84/71/pc	87/71/s
Addis Ababa	74/50/pc	74/48/s
● Algiers	58/47/sh	54/45/r
Amman	60/42/pc	63/42/s
Amsterdam	42/27/c	37/31/pc
Ankara	48/39/r	55/41/c
Asuncion	98/68/s	99/71/s
● Athens	65/50/pc	54/49/sh
● Auckland	72/56/s	72/59/s
Baghdad	63/44/s	66/43/s
Bangkok	80/62/pc	83/64/s
Beijing	39/14/s	45/22/s
Beirut	66/56/pc	69/57/s
Belgrade	38/26/c	39/24/pc
Berlin	33/21/pc	31/23/pc
Bogota	71/43/sh	70/45/pc
Brussels	36/24/c	34/24/c
Bucharest	39/24/c	41/25/c
Budapest	39/28/pc	39/18/pc
Buenos Aires	82/72/s	87/74/s
Cairo	71/54/s	74/53/s
● Cape Town	78/60/s	84/64/s
Caracas	88/74/sh	90/75/pc
Casablanca	68/47/pc	66/39/pc
Colombo	85/75/sh	86/75/r
Copenhagen	34/25/s	37/35/pc
Damascus	60/39/pc	62/36/s
● Dublin	48/45/c	54/49/c
● Geneva	36/27/s	35/22/s
Guatemala City	79/59/s	80/60/s
Hanoi	71/45/pc	73/52/pc
Harare	86/62/pc	83/63/t
Havana	81/66/c	84/64/s
Helsinki	25/21/s	37/35/c
Hong Kong	65/56/s	66/60/pc
● Jakarta	88/77/t	89/77/t
Jerusalem	58/44/pc	63/45/s
Johannesburg	70/60/t	73/57/t
Kabul	36/14/s	35/18/s
Khartoum	83/62/pc	86/61/s
Kyiv	33/26/c	31/23/c
Kingston	89/73/pc	88/73/s
● La Paz	54/37/r	63/33/pc
Lagos	91/75/pc	92/77/pc
Lima	78/66/c	78/67/pc
Lisbon	64/46/pc	60/39/c
London	39/33/c	43/35/pc
Madrid	59/22/s	55/23/s
● Manila	84/74/sh	84/75/r
Mexico City	68/46/sh	71/48/s
Milan	45/26/s	42/26/s
Mombasa	92/76/sh	93/76/sh
Montevideo	78/62/s	83/64/s
Montreal	25/18/pc	29/24/c
● Moscow	32/27/c	30/22/sn
Nairobi	81/62/pc	82/61/pc
New Delhi	62/49/sh	64/45/pc
Panama City	91/73/pc	91/75/sh
Paris	40/28/pc	38/24/s
Port-au-Prince	91/68/s	89/64/s
● Rio de Janeiro	78/71/sh	78/71/r
Riyadh	65/48/sh	69/44/pc
● Rome	52/39/pc	52/38/pc
San Jose	84/65/pc	84/65/pc
San Salvador	85/63/c	88/65/s
Santiago	88/58/c	87/57/s
Sao Paulo	73/63/sh	75/62/pc
● Sarajevo	32/25/c	31/23/c
Shanghai	54/30/pc	58/42/pc
● Singapore	81/75/t	81/74/r
Stockholm	27/16/s	39/36/c
Sydney	82/70/pc	84/70/pc
Taipei	65/49/s	68/53/s
Tegucigalpa	83/61/pc	82/62/pc
Tehran	55/40/pc	55/39/s
● Tokyo	49/40/sh	56/38/s
● Toronto	33/29/sn	33/16/sn
● Tunis	59/47/r	54/47/sh
Vancouver	45/31/pc	43/33/pc
● Vienna	37/29/pc	34/22/c
● Warsaw	34/25/sn	29/23/pc
Yerevan	38/22/c	39/24/pc
Zagreb	39/26/pc	36/23/c
Zurich	35/23/pc	33/20/s

● Denotes possible travel delays Sunday

Weather(W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice.

©2025; forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather
Superior Accuracy™ means you will make better decisions. **Visit AccuWeather.com**

UK retailers crank up search for savings

Sector scrambles ahead of April tax hikes

James Davey and Paul Sandle
REUTERS

LONDON – Britain's big retailers, including Tesco, Sainsbury's, M&S and Next, say they are stepping up their drive for efficiency through automation and other measures, to limit the impact of rising costs on the prices they charge their customers.

As the UK economy struggles to grow, the new Labour government's solution is a hike in employer taxes to raise money for investment in infrastructure and public services, which has prompted criticism from the business community.

Retailers have said the increased social security payments, a rise in the national minimum wage, packaging levies and higher business rates – all coming in April will cost the sector 7 billion pounds ($8.6 billion) a year.

Concerns of the wider economic impact sent retail share prices sharply lower last week and drove up government borrowing costs.

In the retail sector, larger players have more scope to adapt and are cushioned by previous healthy profits, but analysts have said smaller players could find themselves under severe pressure.

Clothing retailer Next said it faced a 67 million pounds increase in wage costs in its year to end-January 2026, but still forecast profit growth.

It reckons it can offset the higher wage bill with measures including a 1% increase in prices that it said was "unwelcome, but still lower than UK general inflation." It can also increase operational efficiencies in its warehouses, distribution network and stores, the company said.

CEO Simon Wolfson said more automation was inevitable across the sector.

"With any mechanization project you're always looking at a pay-back on it – you're saying 'what's the saving versus the cost of the mechanisation, or AI or software,' " he told Reuters.

"If the price of the mechanization doesn't go up, but the price of the labor it saves does go up, it's going to mean that more projects can be justified."

More robots?

Baker and food-to-go chain Greggs last year opened a highly automated production line at its Newcastle, northeast England, site, meaning it can make up to 4 million more steak bakes and other products each week from its current 10 million.

Tesco, Britain's biggest supermarket, is also increasing automation and will open a robotic chilled distribution center in Aylesford, southeast England, this year.

No. 2 grocer Sainsbury's is encouraging more shoppers to use its SmartShop handheld self-scanning technology.

Even though Tesco faces a 250 million pound annual hit from the hike in employer national insurance contributions alone, CEO Ken Murphy said it would cope.

Having navigated the COVID pandemic, supply chain disruption and commodity and energy inflation, he said Tesco was used to dealing with rising costs by finding savings elsewhere.

Finance chief Imran Nawaz said Tesco's "Save to Invest" program was on track to deliver 500 million pounds of efficiency savings in its year to February 2025, having delivered 640 million pounds in 2023/24.

"As we look ahead it's clear it's going to be another year where we'll need to do a stellar job," Nawaz said, singling out savings from better buying by Tesco's procurement organization, in logistics, in freight, and in cutting waste.

Sainsbury's, facing an additional 140 million pounds national insurance headwind, is similarly targeting 1 billion pounds of cost savings by March 2027.

Clothing and food retailer M&S, facing 120 million pounds of extra wage costs, said it aimed to pass on "as little as possible" to consumers.

One of the biggest names on the British high street, the 141-year-old retailer is in the middle of a successful turnaround program and believes it can continue to grind out further savings, modernizing its distribution and supply chain.

"My summary is: big job, but lots in our control and we've got to be ruthlessly focused on costs in these next 12 months," CEO Stuart Machin said.

"We talk a lot about volume growth, because the more we sell, the more that offsets some of these cost pressures."

Ian Lance, fund manager at Redwheel, one of M&S's biggest investors, said the firm was likely to be able to weather the cost challenges better than most.

"They have an exceptionally capable management team and a product offering which is clearly resonating with consumers for its quality and value," he said.

Judge: Airline's focus on ESG in 401(k) plan illegal

Daniel Wiessner
REUTERS

A federal judge in Texas on Friday said American Airlines violated federal law by basing investment decisions for its employee retirement plan on environmental, social and other non-financial factors.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor appeared to be the first of its kind amid growing backlash by conservatives to an uptick in socially-conscious investing.

O'Connor said American had breached its legal duty to make investment decisions based solely on the financial interests of 401(k) plan beneficiaries by allowing BlackRock, its asset manager and a major shareholder, to focus on environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) factors.

"The evidence made clear that [American's] incestuous relationship with BlackRock and its own corporate goals disloyally influenced administration of the Plan," wrote O'Connor, an appointee of Republican former President George W. Bush.

A BlackRock spokesperson said: "We always act independently and with a singular focus on what is in the best financial interests of our clients. Our only agenda is maximizing returns for our clients, consistent with their choices."

The judge ruled after holding a four-day non-jury trial in June, in a class action by American pilot Bryan Spence on behalf of more than 100,000 participants in the retirement plan. O'Connor said he would decide later on whether class members suffered financial harms and American must pay them damages.

American said in a statement that it was reviewing the decision. Lawyers for Spence did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

BlackRock, which on Thursday said it was leaving an environmentally focused investor group under pressure from Republican politicians, is not involved in the lawsuit.

In November, BlackRock and two rival asset managers were sued by 11 Republican-led states who claim the firms violated federal antitrust law through climate activism that reduced coal production and caused energy costs to increase. BlackRock called the claims baseless.

Spence sued American in 2023, saying it had violated the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act by failing to remain loyal to 401(k) plan participants and to prudently oversee their assets.

O'Connor last February rejected American's claims that the lawsuit should be dismissed because Spence could not show that the 401(k) plan had underperformed, paving the way for a trial.

On Friday, the judge said that American had breached its duty of loyalty to retirement plan participants. But the company's decisions did not violate its duty of prudence, O'Connor said, because it was acting according to prevailing industry standards.

O'Connor is known for frequently ruling in favor of conservative litigants challenging laws and regulations governing guns, LGBTQ+ rights and healthcare.

Pfizer must face lawsuit over diversity program, court rules

Nate Raymond
REUTERS

A U.S. appeals court on Friday revived a lawsuit by a conservative group opposed to diversity initiatives in medicine that challenged a Pfizer fellowship program designed to boost the pipeline of Black, Latino and Native American people in leadership positions at the drugmaker.

At the urging of the group Do No Harm, a 2-1 panel of the New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals revisted a decision it issued last year holding the organization lacked legal standing to challenge the drugmaker's program in court.

That earlier decision had raised the bar for groups like Do No Harm to pursue similar cases on behalf of their membership by finding that they needed to identify members who were affected by the alleged discrimination they were suing over by name.

Do No Harm and other conservative advocacy groups had urged the 2nd Circuit to reconsider that holding, which they said would chill civil rights litigation by exposing individuals to harassment and retaliation if their identities were revealed.

The 2nd Circuit panel that issued that decision agreed to reconsider it, and on Friday concluded a trial court judge applied too strict of a standard in assessing whether Do No Harm had standing and should reconsider the issue.

Stanley Goldfarb, Do No Harm's chair, in a statement said it was pleased the court "reversed course and correctly recognized our right to protect our members in the district court."

Pfizer in a statement said Do No Harm's claims were without merit and that it was "proud of its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion."

Virginia-based Do No Harm, which is a non-profit that counts doctors, medical students and others as members and aims "to protect healthcare from radical, divisive and discriminatory ideologies," had no immediate comment.

Do No Harm sued Pfizer in 2022 over the company's Breakthrough Fellowship Program, which aimed to increase the pipeline of Black, Latino and Native American leaders in the company, arguing it discriminated against white and Asian-American applicants.

The lawsuit was filed a month before the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in cases in which its conservative majority would later declare unlawful race-conscious college admissions policies used by Harvard University and the University of North Carolina.

That June 2023 decision, while focused on college admissions, has prompted several lawsuits challenging diversity programs at companies, some of which have since altered their policies.

Walmart and McDonald's are among the companies that have recently backed away from diversity practices following pressure from conservative activists.

Do No Harm challenged Pfizer's program on behalf of two anonymous white or Asian-American members the group claimed were not able to apply to the fellowship, alleging it violated federal anti-discrimination laws.

The program's criteria has since been changed to allow anyone to allow apply.

IRS says service will suffer if Congress cuts funds

David Lawder
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service said on Friday it will launch the 2025 tax filing season on Jan. 27 with expanded tools that cannot be adequately supported if the Republican-controlled Congress rescinds tens of billions of dollars in supplemental IRS funding.

IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel said that should the IRS lose funding that was initially enacted at $80 billion over 10 years, it will have to reduce staffing levels that have improved taxpayer service and reduced processing times and backlogs for tax returns. The agency will also see its modernization program stagnate, putting many technology improvements in limbo, he said.

"And so if we don't have the right staffing levels, the performance will backslide, and we will see inevitably slower processing delays and potential backlogs," Werfel told reporters during a news briefing to preview the 2025 filing season. The IRS won the supplemental funding in 2022 as part of the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act, largely a clean energy subsidy and healthcare bill. The funding, which was passed with votes only from Democrats, made up for more than a decade of understaffing, and the U.S. Treasury had estimated that it would enable beefed up enforcement that would yield $564 billion in new tax revenue over a decade. Republicans called unsuccessfully for the funding to be rescinded, arguing that it would unleash an army of new auditors to harass taxpayers. But they subsequently chopped back $20 billion during government funding battles in 2023, bringing the total down to $60 billion through 2031.

But another $20 billion in funding was suspended under a stop-gap funding measure last fall due to a drafting anomaly that repeated the prior year's language.

Unless that amount is restored, Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo said the U.S. budget deficit could rise by $140 billion over 10 years due to reduced enforcement.

Expanded direct file system

The IRS, which collects 95% of federal revenues, has focused its initial new funding on increasing taxpayer-facing staff to answer questions, bringing average taxpayer phone waiting times to under five minutes. It introduced new scanning technology to allow it to process paper tax returns far more quickly.

Enhancements scheduled for the new tax year include an expanded Direct File system now available in 25 states, up from 12 in a pilot program last year, allowing taxpayers to file simpler electronic returns for free directly with the IRS without the need for a third-party preparer or software. New electronic form-signing capabilities and phone chatbots also are being made available, the IRS said.

Werfel said reduced funding would cause new technology advances to "stagnate" and recently rolled-out tools will have fewer employees supporting them, creating longer wait times for taxpayers with issues.

It also will hurt revenue collections as the rebuilding of the IRS' capacity for sophisticated audits of wealthy taxpayers suffers, he added.

Biden awards Pope medal of freedom

Francis bestowed highest US civilian honor

Andrea Shalal
REUTERS

President Joe Biden honored Pope Francis with the Presidential Medal of Freedom with Distinction over the weekend. KEVIN LAMARQUE/REUTERS FILE

WASHINGTON – President Joe Biden spoke with Pope Francis on Saturday and awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom with Distinction, the nation's highest civilian honor, the White House said.

It was the first time during his four years in office that Biden awarded the medal "with distinction," it said.

Biden, 82, leaves office on Jan. 20. To oversee the federal response to the fires in California, he canceled a trip to Rome this week, where he was due to meet Francis in person.

A lifelong Catholic who has met the pope several times, Biden told reporters on Friday that he was disappointed to cancel the trip, but felt it was more important to stay in Washington.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is presented individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the U.S., world peace, or other significant societal, public or private endeavors.

One week ago, Biden awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, chef Jose Andres and conservationist Jane Goodall, among others.

The White House said Biden spoke by phone with Francis on Saturday and expressed his deep regret that he was unable to visit Rome and Vatican City. The two leaders discussed efforts to advance peace around the world, including Francis' work to alleviate suffering for vulnerable communities, it said.

In his citation for Francis, who was born as Jorge Bergoglio in Argentina, Biden lauded the religious leader's life of service to "the voiceless and vulnerable across Argentina" and his lifetime of service to the poor.

"A loving pastor, he joyfully answers children's questions about God. A challenging teacher, he commands us to fight for peace and protect the planet," Biden wrote.

"The first pope from the Southern Hemisphere, Pope Francis is unlike any who came before. Above all, he is the People's Pope – a light of faith, hope, and love that shines brightly across the world."

Both Biden and Francis have been weakened by global events, said Massimo Faggioli, an Italian academic and professor at Villanova University who follows the papacy.

"That is really hard to underestimate how tragic this moment is for both men in different ways," he said. "Because what could go wrong did go wrong in these few years."

Francis has pushed for an end to Russia's war with Ukraine and has been critical of Israel's military campaign against Palestinian militant group Hamas. Both conflicts are ongoing.

Biden, 82, a regular attender of Mass, departed from church doctrine later in life with his support for abortion rights. In 2021 he said Francis had defended him from criticism by some U.S. Catholics over the issue, including many bishops.

The remains of a temple destroyed by the rising sea along a beach at the coastal village of Satabhaya in Kendrapada district, in India's eastern state of Odisha. DIBYANGSHU SARKAR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Climate

Continued from Page 1NN

and torrential rainfall, because a hotter atmosphere can hold more water, leading to intense downpours. Atmospheric water vapor reached a record high in 2024, and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said it was the third-wettest year on record.

In 2024, Bolivia and Venezuela suffered disastrous fires, while torrential floods hit Nepal, Sudan and Spain, and heat waves in Mexico and Saudi Arabia killed thousands. While climate change now affects people from the richest to the poorest on Earth, political will to address it has waned in some countries.

Governments promised under the 2015 Paris Agreement to try to prevent the average global temperature rise from exceeding 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, who takes office on Jan. 20, has called climate change a hoax, dismissing the global scientific consensus. During his first term in office he withdrew Washington from the Paris Agreement, and he has vowed to push greater fossil fuel production and roll back President Joe Biden's push toward alternative energy.

Recent European elections have shifted political priorities toward industrial competitiveness, with some European Union governments seeking to weaken climate policies they say hurt business.

Matthew Jones, a climate scientist at the University of East Anglia in Britain, said climate-linked disasters will grow more common "so long as progress on tackling the root causes of climate change remains sluggish."

EU climate commissioner Wopke Hoekstra said the 1.5C breach last year showed climate action must be prioritized.

"It is extremely complicated, in a very difficult geopolitical setting, but we don't have an alternative," he told Reuters.

The 1.5C milestone should serve as "a rude awakening to key political actors to get their act together," said Chukwumerije Okereke, a professor of climate governance at Britain's University of Bristol.

Britain's Met Office confirmed 2024's likely breach of 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, while estimating a slightly lower average temperature of 1.53C for the year.

Buontempo noted that 2024 did not breach that target since it measures the longer-term average temperature, but added that rising greenhouse gas emissions put the world on track to blow past the Paris goal soon.

Countries could still rapidly cut emissions to avoid temperatures from rising further to disastrous levels, he added.

"It's not a done deal. We have the power to change the trajectory," Buontempo said.

Concentrations in the atmosphere of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, reached a fresh high of 422 parts per million in 2024, C3S said.

Zeke Hausfather, a research scientist at U.S. nonprofit Berkeley Earth, said he expected 2025 to be among the hottest years on record, but likely not top the rankings. He noted that temperatures in early 2024 got an extra boost from El Niño, a warming weather pattern now trending toward its cooler La Nina counterpart.

"It's still going to be in the top three warmest years," he said.

Insurance

Continued from Page 1NN

full of donated supplies in Pasadena. "But it will be a mess."

Frank said he knows some neighbors who lost their homeowners coverage prior to the fires as insurers retreated from parched regions in California increasingly prone to wildfires.

"We were lucky we still had a policy," he said.

The wildfires, among the worst natural disasters ever to hit California, have killed at least 11 people and destroyed or badly damaged more than 10,000 structures.

Reuters contacted nine of the top home insurance companies in California for comment. State Farm, Nationwide, Allstate, Mercury, Liberty Mutual and Farmers responded with statements saying they were working with policyholders to help them make claims, without addressing specific concerns about residents not receiving sufficient payouts or rising future premiums.

Following the fires last week, California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara invoked moratorium powers to suspend all policy non-renewals and cancellations from insurance companies for one year.

Lara said in a statement on Friday that next week he will host free insurance workshops in Santa Monica and Pasadena, suburbs close to the two biggest fires.

U.S. insurance stocks slid on Friday as analysts estimated the insurance costs from the wildfire could top $20 billion. Private forecaster AccuWeather estimated the damage and economic loss from the fires at $135 billion to $150 billion, portending soaring homeowners' insurance costs.

Though Altadena has never experienced fire devastation on this scale in the past, the suburb does sit at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, which are prone to wildfires. This has made getting fire insurance more difficult.

Many residents in Altadena, a racially and economically diverse suburb, are covered by the California FAIR Plan, an insurance program backed by the state of California that is used by property owners who cannot find private market coverage.

FAIR Plan did not respond to a request for comment.

As private insurers have rejected or dropped homeowners in fire-prone areas of California, residents have increasingly switched to FAIR Plan, data shows.

As of the end of September last year, 958 homes in Altadena were covered by the scheme, up 28% from a year earlier, according to data from the insurer.

In Pacific Palisades, a wealthy suburb west of downtown Los Angeles ravaged by wildfires, the rise in the use of the FAIR plan has been more stark. There are 1,430 homes covered under the scheme, up 85% from a year earlier and quadruple the number in 2020, the insurer's data showed.

Gabby Reyes, whose home in Altadena was destroyed in a fire on Wednesday, said FAIR Plan staff had been helpful but she was concerned that her policy would not be enough to cover rebuilding the home she shares with her mother and daughter, given the fire has only left behind the foundations.

"They have been talking to us, and they've been really good," Reyes said, adding that property speculators had cold-called her to ask if they could buy her land. "You can't call people like that when they're devastated."

People watch smoke rising from the Palisades Fire, one of simultaneous blazes that have ripped across Los Angeles County, in the Tarzana neighborhood of Los Angeles. RINGO CHIU/REUTERS

Angelenos return home to ruins

Wildfires kill at least 10, destroy over 10,000 structures since Tuesday

Matt McKnight and Fred Greaves
REUTERS

LOS ANGELES – Survivors of the wildfires that have been sweeping parts of Los Angeles have started to trickle back to their evacuated homes in recent days, hoping against the odds that they were spared the worst of the devastation.

Many instead found little more than concrete foundations, ashen rubble and memories.

The wildfires, among the worst natural disasters ever to hit California, had killed at least 10 people as of Friday morning and destroyed or badly damaged more than 10,000 structures, authorities said.

Aerial images of some scorched neighborhoods – including parts of Pacific Palisades, a mostly affluent enclave west of downtown, and Altadena, a diverse neighborhood on L.A.'s eastern edge – show block after block of homes burned to the ground.

Those who survived say they feel fortunate to have escaped with their lives. But many shed tears over family homes lost and fears about futures filled with uncertainty.

In a neighborhood of 60 homes ravaged by the Palisades Fire, the only thing left standing at Rick McGeagh's ranch house near the Will Rogers State Park is a statue of the Virgin Mary he installed when they moved there in 1998.

He called the statue's survival an "amazing blessing" in a terrible time. "I think it's miraculous."

McGeagh, 61, a commercial real estate broker who along with his wife raised three children at their home, said only six homes in his neighborhood remained standing.

"Everything else is ash and rubble," he told Reuters on Friday.

He first noticed the fire on Tuesday, when he was out walking his dog near the park and saw odd looking white clouds that turned out to be smoke. He rushed home, packed everything that he could grab in his car and fled with his wife.

Later they watched the progression of the fire that day on their home security camera.

"At five, we saw the neighbor's house across the street go. Then our camera went out."

People embrace after surveying the damage of the school's Palisades campus after it was destroyed in the Palisades Fire in Pacific Palisades, Calif. CHRIS DELMAS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Ivan De La Torre stands near his uncle's burned down home after the Eaton Fire tore through the Los Angeles suburb in Altadena, Calif. JOE BROCK/REUTERS

Avocado tree offers sliver of hope

In the Altadena neighborhood, Alita Johnson, a lifelong resident whose home burned down, was seeking assistance at an evacuation center on Thursday when she bumped into a friend there. After greeting the man and giving him a hug, Johnson, 61, said: "I lost my house."

In a reply all too common in Los Angeles last week, her friend replied, "I know, I'm sorry – we lost everything, too."

En route to see the charred plot of land where her home once stood, Johnson, sitting in the passenger seat of a car, pointed ahead of her and told a Reuters reporter, "This is where I live."

In a trembling voice, Johnson then corrected the verb tense: "Where I lived."

Her voice rose a little as she noted that her avocado tree survived. It was one of the few signs of hope in sight.

"Nothing prepares you for this amount of destruction," she said, her eyes welling with tears.

On the street

"Now we're homeless," Paul Lewis, another Altadena resident whose home burned down, said on Thursday in a matter-of-fact voice. "We're searching for a place to stay."

Lewis and his wife had tried to return to their burned-down home in the hope of recovering any personal effects not consumed in the flames, he said. But the area where they live was blocked off to vehicle traffic.

He didn't want to walk the mile or so to their home with two young children and a dog in tow.

A day earlier they were able to reach the home by car and found it burned down to the foundations, still smoldering. Lewis said that his garage was still on fire that day.

Hotels in the area are fully booked, mostly by people forced to flee their homes, Lewis said. AirBnBs and Vrbos were scarce, he said.

Lewis said his house was covered by insurance – but he was girding for a long fight to recover its value. He foresaw a scenario in which he would have to hire an attorney "to make sure we're protected."

"Insurance companies for a while have been trying to drop coverage for people like us, who live near natural habitat," he said, referring to the nearby Eaton Canyon area. "I'm sure they'll do everything they can to undercut our claim."

Overwhelmed by destruction

At a mobile home park in Pacific Palisades, Curtis, who said he would not like his last name to be published, grimaced and his eyes welled with tears as he took in the burnt ruins all around him. Asked what he had lost, Curtis replied immediately and simply: "Everything."

Then he recalled that he did have his vehicle and "whatever's in the car."

Overwhelmed by the scenes of destruction around him, Curtis added that he hoped a feral neighborhood cat – a beloved local character – "hopefully made it out safely."

Wildfires

Continued from Page 1NN

and smoke emanating from fires that have destroyed 10,000 structures.

Air purifiers were sold out at some big-box stores, according to interviews with employees at four businesses. Some residents were taping windows to keep the smoke out of their homes. And Los Angeles officials urged people to stay indoors in areas where smoke was visible.

While conditions improved on Friday, an air quality alert remained in effect until the evening and dangerous particulate matter remained around four times World Health Organization guidelines.

At the Pasadena Convention Center, which has been converted to a temporary shelter, aid workers from Sean Penn's global humanitarian organization, CORE, were handing out N95 masks on Friday.

Emergency response programs manager Sunny Lee said the homeless were particularly vulnerable to bad air.

"There was no place for them to go inside, and so they were suffering even more outside with the poor air quality, without any kind of masks," Lee said. "So, we pushed out N95 to our partners that reached those communities. We're distributing as many as we can."

A hovering haze

Fanned by fierce winds and fueled by vegetation bone-dry after a long period of little or no rain, the Los Angeles fires broke out on Tuesday and have relentlessly burned more than 34,000 acres, or some 53 square miles. Neighborhoods have turned to ash in some parts of Los Angeles.

Wildfire smoke typically carries with it noxious gases and particulate matter that make it more toxic than normal air pollution. Not only do wildfires burn plants, brush and trees, but also buildings, houses and cars that contain plastics, fuels, metals and a host of chemicals.

Studies have linked wildfire smoke with higher rates of heart attacks, strokes, and cardiac arrests as well as weakened immune defenses.

Environmental health scientists and doctors warned that particulate matter posed a hazard to people with preexisting lung and heart conditions as well as the elderly and children.

Carlos Gould, an environmental health scientist at the University of California San Diego, said the concentration of fine particulate matter in the Los Angeles area reached alarming levels between 40 and 100 micrograms per cubic meter earlier in the week before declining to around 20 on Friday.

The WHO recommended maximum is 5 micrograms per cubic meter.

"The levels of wildfire smoke we've seen in LA these past few days imply between a 5-15% increase in daily mortality," Gould said.

Chemical byproducts from the fires, particularly those stemming from burned human-made materials, penetrate deeper into the lungs and can even enter the bloodstream, said Dr. Afif El-Hasan, a spokesperson for the American Lung Association.

"If you're working harder to breathe and your body is being challenged that way, it can also put a strain on the heart. And that's why you see an increase in heart attacks," El-Hasan said.

Even well outside of the immediate fire zone, residents complained about the smoke. With winds blowing wildfire smoke out to sea, customers at the Potholder Cafe in the coastal community of Long Beach declined to sit outdoors.

Manager Veronica Gutierrez said she bought an air purifier for her home, but it has made little difference.

Justin Gillenwater, burn director at the Los Angeles General Medical Center, expected long-term health impacts from smoke inhalation among people with respiratory conditions and allergies.

"This is going to be something that we're going to be looking into for not just weeks, but really years," he said.

Firefighters battle the Palisades Fire, one of simultaneous blazes that have ripped across Los Angeles County, as seen from the Tarzana neighborhood of Los Angeles. RINGO CHIU/REUTERS

SPORTS EXTRA

NFL PLAYOFFS

Texans quarterback C.J. Stroud, left, runs the ball against Los Angeles Chargers cornerback Kristian Fulton on Saturday in Houston. TROY TAORMINA/IMAGN IMAGES

Ravens running back Derrick Henry runs for a touchdown against the Pittsburgh Steelers on Saturday in Baltimore. TOMMY GILLIGAN/IMAGN IMAGES

BREAKING THROUGH

Texans devour Chargers for wild-card win

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

C.J. Stroud passed for 282 yards and a touchdown, Joe Mixon rushed for 106 yards and a score and Eric Murray returned an interception for a touchdown as the host Houston Texans routed the Los Angeles Chargers 32-12 in an AFC wild-card game on Saturday.

Houston (11-7) advanced to the divisional round for the second straight season.

After throwing just three interceptions in 504 passing attempts during the regular season, Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert surpassed was picked off four times on Saturday. Herbert was 14-for-32 for 242 yards and a touchdown.

See TEXANS, Page 2NS

Sunday's games

(All times Eastern)

Broncos at Bills, 1 p.m., CBS

Packers at Eagles, 4:30 p.m., Fox

Commanders at Buccaneers, 8 p.m., NBC

GAME PREVIEWS, 2-3NS

Henry, Ravens run over Steelers to advance

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Derrick Henry rushed for 186 yards and two scores and Lamar Jackson passed for two touchdowns to lead the host Baltimore Ravens to a 28-14 victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers in an AFC wild-card game on Saturday night.

Jackson completed 16 of 21 passes for 175 yards and rushed for 82 yards on 15 carries while winning for the third time in seven attempts as a postseason starter.

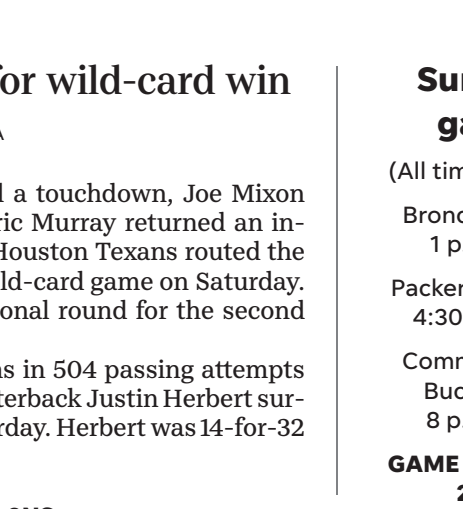
Rashod Bateman and Justice Hill had touchdown receptions for third-seeded Baltimore, which has won five straight games and will learn its next opponent on Sunday.

See RAVENS, Page 2NS

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

Ohio St. can rewrite its narrative for good

Dan Wolken
Columnist
USA TODAY



Ohio State coach Ryan Day celebrates during the Buckeyes' win over Texas on Friday. JEROME MIRON/IMAGN IMAGES

ARLINGTON, Texas – Quinn Ewers was drifting left, looking toward the goal line, his eyes locked on Texas' last chance. There was no time to peek back at which defensive monster was bearing down on him from the blind side, but he already knew it was Jack Sawyer.

Of course it was.

For four months in the fall of 2021, they had been roommates at Ohio State. They had been close. And now here they were, physically closer than ever but emotionally separated by jerseys and traumas and the chance for redemption that only one of them would be able to cash in.

This breathtaking College Football Playoff had placed these two teams, and these two players, in a moment that only sports can create. Even among friends, there can only be one winner.

It was one play within a 60-minute game within a month of postseason

See WOLKEN, Page 4NS

GOLF PGA TOUR

Spaun climbs into lead at Sony Open in Hawaii

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Even with a narrow lead and any number of golfers capable of surging to the top, J.J. Spaun knows it's best to limit his emotions.

Spaun shot a 5-under 65 to move into the lead through three rounds of the Sony Open on Saturday at Waialae Country Club in Honolulu.

"I've felt pretty calm and relaxed," Spaun said. "It's always laid-back and easygoing. I've been carrying that mindset on the course, and it's easy to feel that way when things are going your way and you're playing well."

Spaun's best score of the tournament puts him at 13-under 197 going to Sunday's final round. He'll have plenty of pursuers within range.

He's ahead of second-round co-leader Patrick Fishburn (68), Eric Cole (67) and Germany's Stephan Jaeger (62) by one stroke. Jaeger had the best score of the day, with birdies on six of the final 10 holes.

Spaun, appearing in his 219th PGA Tour event, is seeking his second victory. The first came in the 2022 Texas Open. This marks the fourth time he has been on top or shared the lead through three rounds.

J.J. Spaun lines up a putt on the first hole during the third round of the Sony Open on Saturday in Honolulu. KYLE TERADA/IMAGN IMAGES

See SONY OPEN, Page 8NS

NFL PLAYOFFS

BRONCOS AT BILLS 1 P.M. ET, CBS

QB Allen, Bills begin Super Bowl quest

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen (17) scrambles against the New York Jets at Highmark Stadium on Dec. 29 in Orchard Park, N.Y. TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE - USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

With Sean McDermott and Josh Allen in charge, the Buffalo Bills have churned out one great regular season after another. And year after year, the franchise's first Super Bowl title has eluded them.

Buffalo, the No. 2 seed in the AFC for the third year running, begins its latest playoff journey against the seventh-seeded Denver Broncos on Sunday afternoon in Orchard Park, N.Y.

The Broncos (10-7) made the postseason for the first time since Peyton Manning guided them to the Super Bowl 50 title. In the nine years since, the Bills (13-4) have become a playoff staple: They've qualified for the sixth year in a row, and they won their wild-card game each of the past four postseasons.

Of course, they've managed just one AFC Championship Game appearance in that stretch. McDermott said that adversity has become part of the Bills' identity.

"I would say yes and no," the coach said. "I would say yes because it is in our history, of not getting to accomplish our ultimate goal year to year. But at the end of the day, we've had a lot of success and it's a hard thing to win in this league. And you're looking at an AFC that is loaded with high-level teams, and it starts right from the start with Week 1 for us with a really good football team in the Denver Broncos."

Allen has thrown 13 touchdown passes in five appearances in the wild-card round (4-1 record). Only Ben Roethlisberger and Aaron Rodgers have totaled more wild-card TDs in their careers.

One major difference this time around for Buffalo: The architect of the offense is Joe Brady. In his first full season as the coordinator following two years as quarterbacks coach, the Bills have the No. 2 scoring offense (30.9 points per game) and rank ninth in both passing and rushing yardage.

Asked Wednesday what Brady has done for the unit – as franchises in need of a head coach snoop around – Allen quipped, "Nothing. Teams should stay away from him."

The key battle will be whether Buffalo can play mistake-free football against Denver's disruptive defense.

The Bills gave up the fewest sacks (14) and fewest turnovers (eight) in the league. The Broncos racked up 63 sacks, nine more than any other team, and generated 25 takeaways.

Broncos coach Sean Payton explained the many benefits a sack-happy defense provides.

"It goes against trying to stay on schedule. It goes against getting to the third-down numbers that are manageable," said Payton, a Super Bowl champion with New Orleans 15 years ago. "And then, there's this emotional and psychological toll with a sack that you have to overcome."

Nik Bonitto had a breakout season, leading the defense with 13.5 sacks among his 16 tackles for loss and two forced fumbles. Jonathon Cooper added 10.5 sacks.

While the defense has been stellar, the Broncos also found their long-sought franchise quarterback in first-round draft pick Bo Nix. He finished the regular season with 3,775 passing yards, 29 passing touchdowns and four rushing scores.

Last week, Nix threw for 321 yards and four touchdowns in a 38-0 win over a resting Kansas City Chiefs team to clinch Denver's playoff bid.

"It means a lot. (The playoffs are) where I want to be," the 24-year-old rookie said.

"This is the moments that matter, these are the moments that people remember you by. We just got to go out there and cut it loose and go out there and play."

These teams last met in November 2023, when the Broncos went to Buffalo and pulled out a 24-22 victory. Allen threw two picks and lost a fumble that day.

The injury reports are light for both teams. Broncos backup tackle Frank Crum (illness) didn't practice Wednesday and reserve cornerback Damarri Mathis (back) was limited. The Bills' only injury-related absence from Wednesday's walkthrough was defensive back/kick returner Brandon Codrington (hamstring).

Texans running back Joe Mixon (28) runs the ball against Los Angeles Chargers safety Alohi Gilman on Saturday in Houston. TROY TAORMINA/IMAGN IMAGES

Texans

Continued from Page 1

The Chargers scored the first six points, on field goals of 35 and 39 yards by Cameron Dicker. His second came after a Texans fumble gave Los Angeles a short field.

Ka'imi Fairbairn connected on field goals of 41, 37 and 30 yards for Houston.

Los Angeles finished its first season under coach Jim Harbaugh at 11-7.

Houston ran just four offensive plays during the first quarter and had two punts bookending a Stroud interception to start the second.

Fortunes changed just before halftime. Houston drove 99 yards in 13 plays, punctuating the possession with a 13-yard scoring pass from Stroud to Nico Collins with 58 seconds left in the second quarter.

Stroud extended the drive with a highlight-reel play entering the two-minute warning. He scooped up a fumbled snap, then scrambled to connect with Xavier Hutchinson for a 34-yard gain to the Los Angeles 49-yard line on third-and-16.

Herbert threw three straight incompletions on the ensuing Chargers possession, and Houston responded with Fairbairn's 41-yard field goal to take a 10-6 halftime lead.

The Texans scored the first 13 points after intermission. Murray delivered the lone touchdown over that span with a 38-yard pick six with 13 seconds left in the third quarter.

Houston 32, L.A. Chargers 12

L.A. Chargers	6	0	0	6 –	12
Houston	0	10	10	12 –	32

First Quarter

LAC–Cameron Dicker 35 yd FG, 9:37.
LAC–Cameron Dicker 39 yd FG, 6:35.

Second Quarter

Hou–Nico Collins 13 yd pass from C.J. Stroud (Ka'imi Fairbairn kick), 0:58.
Hou–Ka'imi Fairbairn 41 yd FG, 0:03.

Third Quarter

Hou–Ka'imi Fairbairn 37 yd FG, 4:48.
Hou–Eric Murray 38 yd interception return (Ka'imi Fairbairn kick), 0:13.

Fourth Quarter

Hou–Ka'imi Fairbairn 30 yd FG, 12:00.
LAC–Ladd McConkey 86 yd pass from Justin Herbert, 10:38.
Hou–D'Angelo Ross extra point return, 10:38.
Hou–Joe Mixon 17 yd run (Ka'imi Fairbairn kick), 3:42.
A–71,408

	LAC	Hou
First downs	15	20
Total Net Yards	261	429
Rushes-yards	18-50	34-168
Passing	211	261
Punt Returns	0-0	1-10
Kickoff Returns	3-76	1-28
Interceptions Ret.	1-0	4-108
Comp-Att-Int	14-32-4	22-33-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-31	3-21
Punts	5-44.2	4-45.8
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	3-2
Penalties-Yards	2-10	8-86
Time of Possession	25:35	34:25

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING–L.A. Chargers, Dobbins 9-26, Edwards 7-22, Haskins 1-5, Davis 1-(minus 3). Houston, Mixon 25-106, Stroud 6-42, Pierce 2-15, Ogunbowale 1-5.
PASSING–L.A. Chargers, Herbert 14-32-4-242. Houston, Stroud 22-33-1-282.
RECEIVING–L.A. Chargers, McConkey 9-197, Dissly 2-16, Fisk 1-15, Chark 1-10, Davis 1-4. Houston, Collins 7-122, Metchie III 4-28, Stover 4-28, Schultz 2-23, Woods 2-22, Hutchinson 1-34, Mixon 1-13, Johnson 1-12.
MISSED FIELD GOALS–None.

Ravens

Continued from Page 1

Henry, who carried 26 times, rushed for more than 150 yards for the fourth time in eight career playoff appearances. His postseason high of 195 came against the Ravens in the 2019 season divisional round when he was a member of the Tennessee Titans.

Russell Wilson was 20 of 29 for 270 yards and two touchdowns for sixth-seeded Pittsburgh, which trailed by 21 points twice while losing its fifth consecutive game. George Pickens had five catches for 87 yards and a touchdown and Van Jefferson also had a scoring reception for the Steelers.

The Ravens totaled 299 rushing yards and outgained Pittsburgh 464-280.

The Steelers had just 29 yards on the ground with a long gain of 5.

Baltimore receiver Zay Flowers (knee) missed the game.

The Ravens led 21-0 at halftime after dominating the first 30 minutes and putting together touchdown drives of 95, 85 and 90 yards.

Baltimore outgained the Steelers 308-59 and had a 19-2 edge in first downs in the half.

The Ravens took the lead on Jackson's 15-yard touchdown pass to Bateman with 4:45 left in the first quarter. Henry's 8-yard scoring run made it 14-0 with 4:09 left in the first half.

Jackson later scrambled out of trouble and hit Hill on a 5-yard scoring pass with two seconds remaining.

Baltimore 28, Pittsburgh 14

Pittsburgh	0	0	14	0 –	14
Baltimore	7	14	7	0 –	28

First Quarter

Bal–Rashod Bateman 15 yd pass from Lamar Jackson (Justin Tucker kick), 4:45.

Second Quarter

Bal–Derrick Henry 8 yd run (Justin Tucker kick), 4:09.
Bal–Justice Hill 5 yd pass from Lamar Jackson (Justin Tucker kick), 0:02.

Third Quarter

Pit–Van Jefferson 30 yd pass from Russell Wilson (Chris Boswell kick), 8:05.
Bal–Derrick Henry 44 yd run (Justin Tucker kick), 5:49.
Pit–George Pickens 36 yd pass from Russell Wilson (Chris Boswell kick), 3:24.

	Pit	Bal
First downs	11	29
Total Net Yards	280	464
Rushes-yards	11-29	50-299
Passing	232	155
Punt Returns	1-14	1-4
Kickoff Returns	1-26	0-0
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	20-30-0	16-21-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-19	1-10
Punts	5-50.0	4-45.8
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	7-41	3-14
Time of Possession	20:27	39:33

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING–Pittsburgh, Harris 6-17, Wilson 3-6, Warren 2-6. Baltimore, Henry 26-186, Jackson 15-81, Sims 1-15, Hill 6-12, Andrews 2-5.
PASSING–Pittsburgh, Wilson 20-29-0-270, Fields 0-1-0-0. Baltimore, Jackson 16-21-0-175.
RECEIVING–Pittsburgh, Pickens 5-87, Warren 4-19, Harris 3-41, Freiermuth 3-15, Jefferson 2-37, Williams 1-37, Austin III 1-25, Washington 1-9. Baltimore, Hill 4-13, Likely 3-53, Miller 3-12, Andrews 2-27, Bateman 2-24, Agholor 1-25, Wallace 1-21.
MISSED FIELD GOALS–None.

Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson (8) runs against the Steelers' Minkah Fitzpatrick (39) and Nick Herbig on Saturday. TOMMY GILLIGAN/IMAGN IMAGES

NFL PLAYOFFS

PACKERS AT EAGLES 4:30 P.M. ET, FOX

Eagles, Packers renew acquaintances

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts (1) scrambles from Packers defensive end Kingsley Enagbare during their Sept. 6 game in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The Eagles won 34-29. The teams meet again Sunday in an NFC wild-card game. KIRBY LEE/IMAGN IMAGES

The last time the Packers and Eagles tangled in the postseason, Green Bay won a wild-card game in Philadelphia before capping the 2010 campaign with a victory at Super Bowl XLV.

The first time these franchises ever met in the playoffs, the Eagles defeated Vince Lombardi's Packers to capture the 1960 NFL Championship.

The first lines in perhaps another championship chapter will be written Sunday when the Eagles (14-3) welcome the Packers (11-6) to Lincoln Financial Field for an NFC wild-card game.

It's a rematch of their season-opening game on Sept. 6 in Brazil. Philadelphia recorded a 34-29 win behind three total touchdowns and 109 rushing yards from 2024 NFL rushing king Saquon Barkley.

Jalen Hurts passed for 278 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions in the victory, while Jordan Love threw for 260 yards, two TDs and one pick for the Packers.

There were positive developments for both quarterbacks on Wednesday. Hurts practiced for the first time since he sustained a concussion in the first quarter of a Week 16 loss at Washington. Love also practiced on a limited basis after leaving the Week 18 loss to Chicago with an elbow injury.

Coach Nick Sirianni said he wasn't worried about rust with Hurts, who took the Eagles to the Super Bowl during the 2022 season but lost wild-card games at Tampa Bay after both the 2021 and 2023 seasons.

"This is why you practice," Sirianni said Wednesday. "This is why you go through the process of practicing and all the things that you do in practice to get on the same page to do everything there. We feel like we practice at a very high-intensity level. This is why you go out there and do these things."

Love made his playoff debut last season, posting a 48-32 wild-card win at Dallas before falling 24-21 in the divisional round at San Francisco.

"We'll see. Yeah, I'm hopeful," Love told reporters after practice Wednesday about his chances of playing Sunday.

In this season's Week 1 game in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Barkley scored on an 18-yard reception and on runs of 11 and 2 yards. A.J. Brown caught five passes for 119 yards with a 67-yard touchdown to lead the Eagles.

"They got a lot of playmakers, so you just gotta be on all your details and try to eliminate as much space as possible," Green Bay coach Matt LaFleur said Wednesday.

"... We know the margins are razor thin in this league and you gotta be at your best when your best is required, certainly against one of the premier football teams in this league."

The offensive production was nearly identical, with the Packers outgaining the Eagles 414-410. Jayden Reed had 171 yards from scrimmage (138 receiving, 33 rushing) and two TDs for Green Bay.

For the season, Philadelphia finished seventh in scoring (27.2 points per game) and eighth in total offense (367.2 yards per game). The Eagles were No. 1 in total defense (278.4) and No. 2 in scoring defense (17.8).

Green Bay was No. 5 in total offense (370.8) and had the No. 6 defense (315.6).

The Packers tied for third in the league with a plus-12 turnover margin.

In addition to Hurts, Brown (knee), backup QB Kenny Pickett (ribs) and rookie running back Will Shipley (ankle) were all limited in Philadelphia's practice Wednesday.

The Packers lost Christian Watson for the season with a torn ACL against the Bears but fellow wide receiver Romeo Doubs is back after missing that game with an illness. Linebacker Quay Walker and rookie safety Evan Williams practiced Wednesday after both missed the past three games.

Quarterback Malik Willis (thumb), linebacker Edgerrin Cooper (illness, knee), defensive lineman Brenton Cox (foot) and safety Javon Bullard (ankle) were limited. Defensive lineman T.J. Slaton (ankle) did not practice.

COMMANDERS AT BUCCANEERS 8 P.M. ET, NBC

Daniels looks to keep emotions in check

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Washington Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels (5) is sacked by Dallas Cowboys linebacker Micah Parsons during the first quarter of a game at AT&T Stadium on Jan. 5 in Arlington, Texas. TIM HEITMAN/IMAGN IMAGES

Jayden Daniels' rookie season is going so well that it makes sense that he sees Sunday night's playoff contest as "just another game."

Perhaps Daniels will feel differently once the ball is kicked off as he attempts to lead the sixth-seeded Commanders past the third-seeded Tampa Bay Buccaneers in an NFC wild-card game at Tampa, Fla.

The Commanders (12-5) enter the postseason with a five-game winning streak and won 12 regular-season games – just the fourth time in franchise history that Washington has won at least a dozen contests.

That success primarily is due to the multi-faceted quarterback who was drafted second overall. Daniels passed for 3,568 yards and 25 touchdowns against nine interceptions and also rushed for 891 yards and six scores.

"It's exciting, but you got to deal with those emotions," Daniels told reporters. "At the end of the day, you got to go out there and play ball. A lot of people are going to put a lot of emphasis on it because at this point, it's really win or go home."

The Washington franchise hasn't won a playoff game since the 2005 season when Hall of Fame member Joe Gibbs was its head coach. Coincidentally, that triumph came at Tampa Bay, 17-10 in the wild-card round.

The following week, Washington lost to the Seattle Seahawks in the divisional round to start a five-game postseason losing streak.

The most recent playoff loss came in the 2020 season – again versus the Bucs. Tampa Bay won that wild-card matchup 31-23 at Washington.

The two teams met in September in Daniels' NFL debut. Daniels rushed for two touchdowns but didn't throw for any in a 37-20 road loss. The Buccaneers had the hotter quarterback as Baker Mayfield completed 24 of 30 passes for 289 yards and four touchdowns.

Commanders coach Dan Quinn hasn't forgotten the way Tampa Bay moved the ball at will. He's also aware the Buccaneers (10-7) enter the postseason with six victories in their past seven games.

"I think they've just had a fantastic year," Quinn said. "I think (Mayfield) has always been able to rip it and been aggressive in and outside the pocket. Having the run game balance for them, I think that's what sets their offense apart this year.

"The addition of (Bucky) Irving, their run game, the play pass that goes with it that is an impressive thing."

Mayfield established career highs of 4,500 yards and 41 touchdowns this season while being intercepted 16 times.

Irving, a rookie, has excelled for the Buccaneers.

The fourth-round draft pick has rushed for 1,122 yards and eight touchdowns.

Tampa Bay is in the playoffs for the fifth consecutive season and second time under Mayfield. The Buccaneers beat the Philadelphia Eagles in the wild-card round last season before losing to the Detroit Lions in the divisional round.

"You're excited to get to the playoffs and you're excited for the next opportunity and getting to play with this group guaranteed for one more time," Mayfield told reporters.

"That's the mentality going into it but other than that, preparation-wise you don't want to psych everybody out. You want to handle it the best way you can but just a little bit more attention to detail and ensuring the fact that everybody is on the same page and can handle things correctly."

The game could turn out to be an offensive showcase as Tampa Bay ranks fourth in scoring at 29.5 points per game and Washington stands fifth at 28.5.

"It's (about) mentality for us, find any way to win, whether the game is a shootout, whether it's low scoring," Mayfield said. "Make the plays that matter when it counts."

Tampa Bay standout safety Antoine Winfield Jr. (knee) was a full practice participant Wednesday and is expected to return after a four-game absence. Tight end Cade Otton (knee) was limited and could return after missing three games.

Washington hopes to have cornerback Marshon Lattimore (hamstring) back after a two-game absence. He was limited Wednesday, as was center Tyler Biadasz (ankle), who missed the regular-season finale against Dallas.

FOOTBALL

Longhorns crumbled after curious call

Blake Toppmeyer
College football columnist
USA TODAY NETWORK

ARLINGTON, Texas – Steve Sarkisian got cute, but it sure didn't look pretty.

Sarkisian earns acclaim for being one of the nation's premier play callers, but he fell into a familiar coaching trap Friday of trying to show just how very smart he is with a play sheet in his hands.

Only, Ohio State's defense made Sarkisian look foolish at the close of the Buckeyes' 28-14 victory in the Cotton Bowl.

The scene: First-and-goal from the 1-yard line. Texas trailed by a touchdown late in the fourth quarter. The Longhorns needed to move three feet to tie this College Football Playoff semifinal.

First down: Texas audibles into a Power-I formation, but Ohio State stuffs a run up the middle.

No harm. Three more tries for three feet.

Second down: Sarkisian goes way too deep into his bag. He calls a toss sweep off left tackle out of the shotgun formation. The Buckeyes had it defended, dead to rights. Safety Caleb Downs shot into the backfield untouched and nearly ended the play then and there.

Texas ball carrier Quintrevion Wisner escaped Downs, but he made no headway toward the end zone, as his run pushed further to the sideline. Safety Lathan Ransom pinballed off Texas left tackle Kelvin Banks Jr. Ransom wrapped up Wisner 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage.

That's how you go from first-and-1 to third-and-8.

Texas quarterback Quinn Ewers fumbles as he's hit by Ohio State safety Sonny Styles in the Cotton Bowl on Friday night. TIM HEITMAN/IMAGN IMAGES

Two plays later, Ohio State's Jack Sawyer ended Texas' comeback hopes with a strip-sack of Quinn Ewers. Sawyer scooped up the fumble and lugged his prize 83 yards into the end zone.

"Just a miraculous play," linebacker Cody Simon said of Sawyer's strip-sack and score. "That moment is going to live in history forever."

Absolutely, it will, but Texas got off into the weeds two plays previously, when Ransom's tackle for loss put the Longhorns behind the 8-ball.

• Steve Sarkisian defends play call that sent Texas in reverse.

Sarkisian stood by his toss sweep play call. "That's one of those plays if you block it all right, you get in the end zone," Sarkisian said. "We didn't."

Sarkisian didn't fool Ohio State, either.

To hear Downs tell it, the Buckeyes were ready for that toss sweep.

"You could see it on film," Downs said. "They like that play when big moments come up."

No sooner had Ewers received the snap than Downs made a beeline for Wisner. Downs pushed Wisner off course before Ransom cleaned up the tackle. "They've done that throughout the year – crack tosses to the boundary," Downs said. "I'm just happy that, when I missed the tackle, Lathan made it."

Ransom's reflexes weren't quite as quick as Downs' right after the snap, but he wasn't far behind his teammate. Ransom didn't let Banks, Texas' hulking tackle whom NFL scouts like, slow him up for long. "No one really loafs into big plays," Simon said. "He pulled his trigger and made a huge play."

What went wrong on that second-down run, from Wisner's perspective?

"I'm not even sure," the Texas running back said.

Not his fault. He never had a chance.

"If you give us an inch, we'll defend it," Simon said. "That was the epitome of that right there."

• Big plays give Ohio State the edge on Texas in Cotton Bowl.

Texas never led this game, but it battled against an opponent that's emerged throughout the playoff as the front-runner to win the national championship. Midway through the fourth quarter, the score stood knotted at 14.

"They made their plays when it counted most," Texas linebacker David Gbenda said.

Such as quarterback Will Howard's 18-yard run on a fourth-down play to set up the Buckeyes' go-ahead score in the fourth quarter.

Or, TreVeyon Henderson's 75-yard touchdown on a screen pass.

Texas had tied the score at 7 before kicking a touchback with 29 seconds left before halftime. Ohio State could go into the locker room tied, but why not try something safe and see what happened?

Any football novice knows to expect a screen in that situation. Sure enough, Buckeyes offensive coordinator Chip Kelly dialed one up.

And, sure enough, Texas fell for it.

Ohio State's two offensive tackles stayed home to block, while the Buckeyes' three interior linemen leaked forward to block for the screen. Four Texas defenders rushed toward Howard while the screen slowly developed. At the final moment, Howard flipped a completion to Henderson. The Buckeyes had Texas walled off.

Henderson found the seam and, boom, he was gone. Gone for a score, untouched.

"He's one of the fastest people I've ever seen," Buckeyes wide receiver Emeka Egbuka said of Henderson.

Texas' defense looked creaky on that screen pass, before its blocking became "leaky," as Sarkisian put it, on that second-down toss sweep one yard from the end zone, two quarters later.

But, why call a high-risk run to the boundary on second down?

Earlier in the game, Sarkisian effectively dialed up a quarterback run for backup quarterback Arch Manning to move the chains on fourth down during a drive that ended in a touchdown. Reinserting Manning might have worked near the goal line. Or, another run or two inside the tackles might have done the trick.

We'll never know. We do know the Buckeyes weren't the slightest bit duped by a toss sweep that probably seemed clever to Sarkisian when he called it, but looked awfully silly and sloppy in action.

NFL NOTEBOOK

Report: Raiders to talk to Carroll for coach job

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

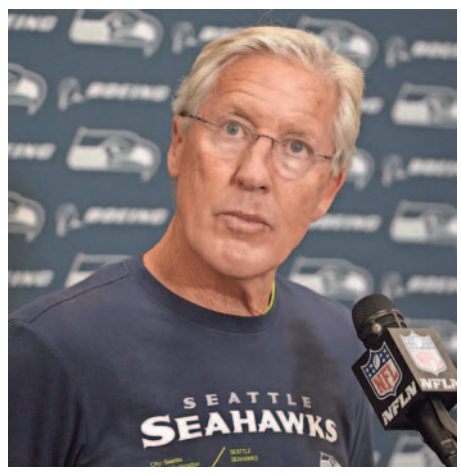
Former Super Bowl winner Pete Carroll will interview on Monday with the Las Vegas Raiders for the vacant head-coaching position, NFL Network reported Saturday.

Carroll already interviewed for the same post with the Chicago Bears earlier this week.

The Raiders fired head coach Antonio Pierce on Tuesday, two days after concluding a 4-13 season.

Pierce, 46, went 9-17 over 1½ seasons as coach. He first became the head coach on an interim basis after the midseason firing of Josh McDaniels in 2023.

Carroll, 73, won a Super Bowl during his 14-year tenure with Seattle and has the most wins of any Seahawks coach (137). He also set the record for most playoff appearances (10) and wins (10) in franchise history. Carroll served as an adviser this season after stepping down following the 2023 campaign.



Former Seahawks head coach Pete Carroll reportedly will interview for the Raiders vacant head-coaching position. KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

Lions OC Johnson talks to Bears about head-coach job opening

Detroit Lions offensive coordinator Ben Johnson, one of the hottest candidates on the 2025 head-coaching circuit, interviewed for the Chicago Bears' top job, the team announced Saturday.

Johnson, 38, interviewed with the New England Patriots on Friday, and NFL.com reported that he's also spoken with the Las Vegas Raiders and Jacksonville Jaguars.

All interviews are being conducted virtually, under league rules, because the Lions are in the playoffs.

The Bears are searching for a head coach to replace Matt Eberflus, who was fired after Week 13 with the team at 4-8. Offensive coordinator Thomas Brown finished the season with a 1-4 mark as the Bears finished in last place in the tough NFC North.

Johnson has been on the Detroit offensive coaching staff since 2019 and was promoted to offensive coordinator in 2022. He previously worked with the Miami Dolphins (2012-18).

Jaguars interview Lions DC Glenn for current head-coach vacancy

The Jacksonville Jaguars have interviewed Detroit Lions defensive coordinator Aaron Glenn for their head-coaching vacancy, the team confirmed.

The team is searching for a replacement for Doug Pederson, who was fired Monday after the Jaguars finished 4-13 in his third season with the club.

Glenn, 52, has been the Lions' DC since 2021. Detroit finished seventh in the league this season in scoring defense (20.1) and 20th in total defense (342.4).

He is the second candidate to have interviewed for the job. On Friday, the club said it had conducted an interview with Kansas City Chiefs defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo.

Packers sign QB Clifford amid Love's recent right elbow injury

The Packers signed quarterback Sean Clifford to the 53-man roster so he can serve as an emergency backup to Jordan Love if needed in Sunday's NFC wild-card game against the host Philadelphia Eagles, the team announced.

Love is off the injury list and is expected to start Sunday, with backup QB Malik Willis also expected to be ready to play but both have been dealing with injuries this week.

Love made solid progress throughout the week after leaving the Packers' Week 18 loss to Chicago with a right elbow injury. He was a full practice participant on Thursday and Friday and wasn't given an injury designation.

Wolken

Continued from Page 1

football within a 16-game season within years of colliding narratives about coaching decisions and reputations and what it means to be burdened by a specific kind of failure.

And it was everything.

This time, it was Sawyer ripping the ball away, rumbling 83 yards down the sideline, an Ohio kid clinching the Buckeyes' spot in the national championship game when they were left for dead in December.

"We heard a lot of things," Sawyer said. "We kept swinging."

And this time, it was Ewers on his stomach, a Texas kid watching helplessly as a national semifinal slipped away from the Longhorns for a second straight year.

This time, it was Ohio State 28, Texas 14.

"It sucks," Ewers said. "He's a great player, great individual, great person. So, you know, it sucks."

They did not award a national championship here on Friday night, even though it kind of seemed like it. That will happen on Jan. 20 in Atlanta, when the Buckeyes face Notre Dame in another matchup of mega-brands and storylines deserving of its own due.

But now, in this sport, there are no coronations. Every step toward a championship feels like an epic, and every failure a cataclysm.

Ohio State could not have won this game and cannot win a national title without unloading an unimaginable amount of emotional baggage. And Texas could not have lost it without wounds getting picked at until they bled.

A year ago, Ewers had a ball in the air that would have sent the Longhorns to the national championship game. It was never caught, and everyone in the program vowed to come back and make it right.

And here, in this very same building, Ohio State had to suffer the indignity of losing a meaningless Cotton Bowl to Missouri while Michigan – the program that had lodged itself in the Buckeyes' collective heads – went on to win the title a handful of days later.

"No great accomplishments are ever achieved without going through adversity," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said. "That's just the truth. And we've gone through our share of adversity, and that's life."

You can thumb your nose if you want at the notion of adversity for a football coach who makes $10 million a year and a roster of elite athletes collectively making $20 million playing a game that many of them will go on to make their careers.

But this is what they do. This is the world in which they live. And it can be cruel. It can hurt, especially when the narrative that they have failed feeds on itself year after year after year.

"Football is not meant to be easy," Texas coach Steve Sarkisian said. "It's a tough sport. It's physically grueling. It's mentally grueling. But I wouldn't have changed it for the world."

Sarkisian, too, knows what it's like to be the avatar of a football-mad state's expectations and the subject of its ire. Or, at least, he will now.

Three plays before the collision between Sawyer and Ewers, Texas had the ball in first-and-goal at the 1-yard line. The clock had just ticked under four minutes to play. Ohio State had taken a 21-14 lead moments earlier, but Texas was on the doorstep, ready to surely tie the game. The Buckeyes' defense looked gassed.

"We talked before the game about, how do you leave a legacy?" Day said, but it wasn't only Ohio State's legacy on the line. At that very moment, it felt like any outcome was possible.

On first down, Texas couldn't stuff the ball into the end zone by running inside. Ohio State had brought in its biggest defensive personnel, daring the Longhorns to take the ball to the perimeter.

Then Sarkisian, who had called a near-perfect second half to get Texas in position to win, made the most consequential play-call of the entire college football season.

"We didn't get much movement at all, and we had a plan to try to get the ball on the edge," Sarkisian said. "I can't quite tell where it got leaky, but you know, it's one of those plays that if you block it right, you get in the end zone. And we didn't."

Not even close. Texas' pitch to running back Quintrevion Wisner didn't just go nowhere – it went seven yards backward. In the blink of an eye, Texas had gone from a few feet away from tying the game to a desperate situation with only two plays to score. Time was running out, nearing the two-minute mark. This was all the Longhorns really had left.

And then Sawyer straight-up took it from them. Disaster.

Now all that's left is one more game to wash away the stench of disappointment they've had to live in after four straight season-defining losses to Michigan.

NHL

SATURDAY'S ROUNDUP

Robertson's SO goal carries surging Stars

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Jason Robertson's shootout goal was the difference Saturday as the Dallas Stars extended their winning streak to seven, beating the host Montreal Canadiens 2-1.

Jamie Benn netted his 12th goal of the season for the Stars. Jake Oettinger stopped 30 shots in regulation and overtime and then stopped Patrik Laine, Cole Caufield and Nick Suzuki in the shootout to snap Montreal's three-game winning streak – all of which required overtime or a shootout.

Laine, who missed the previous four games because of an illness, did score in his return for the Canadiens. Sam Montembeault recorded 34 saves for the Habs.

Dallas Stars forward Jason Robertson (21) celebrates with teammates after scoring a shootout goal Saturday in Montreal. ERIC BOLTE/IMAGN IMAGES

Bruins 4, Panthers 3, OT

David Pastrnak scored with 1.2 seconds left in overtime for Boston, which snapped a six-game losing streak with a win over host Florida in Sunrise, Fla.

Pastrnak, who finished with two goals and one assist, got the game-winner on an attempted pass that deflected in off the stick of Florida's Sam Reinhart. The puck carried over the head of goalie Sergei Bobrovsky.

That gave Pastrnak six goals in his past five games.

Devils 3, Lightning 2, OT

Stefan Noesen scored a power-play goal with 1:41 remaining in overtime as New Jersey ran its home winning streak to six games with a victory over Tampa Bay in Newark, N.J.

The Devils, playing at home for the first time in 2025 following a six-game road trip, got a power play with 3:16 left in overtime when Jack Hughes was tripped in the offensive zone by Nick Paul. After the Devils took a timeout, they put four forwards on the ice and cycled the puck around.

A pass from Jesper Bratt hit the middle of the slot but Tampa Bay forward Luke Glendening fumbled the puck and Noesen pounced. Positioned near the left side of the crease, Noesen turned around and flipped the puck into the right side of the net over goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy's glove.

Oilers 4, Blackhawks 3

Zach Hyman scored the game-winner with 13 minutes left in regulation and Edmonton held on to edge host Chicago.

Vasily Podkolzin scored a goal and added an assist, and Adam Henrique and Corey Perry also scored for the Oilers, who have won five of six.

Leon Draisaitl had a pair of assists and Calvin Pickard made 19 saves as Edmonton improved to 13-3-1 over a 17-game stretch.

Blue Jackets 2, Blues 1

Jet Greaves made 31 saves to lead visiting Columbus past St. Louis.

Adam Fantilli and Cole Sillinger scored for the Blue Jackets, who won their fourth straight game.

Colton Parayko scored and Jordan Binnington made 28 saves for the Blues, who lost for the third time in four games.

Islanders 2, Utah 1

Mathew Barzal scored with 1:25 left in regulation as New York completed a perfect three-game road trip by edging the Utah Hockey Club in Salt Lake City.

Barzal's goal capped a flurry that began with Anders Lee sending a shot through the crease. Seconds later, Barzal deflected a shot by teammate Ryan Pulock before sending an off-balance shot toward the net. Utah goalie Connor Ingram couldn't corral the puck. Lee tried jamming home the rebound before the puck squirted loose again and skittered to Barzal, who swooped in, went to one knee and beat Ingram.

Utah immediately pulled Ingram, but the Islanders blocked four shots and goalie Marcus Hogberg made one save to preserve the win.

Rangers 2, Golden Knights 1

Igor Shesterkin stopped 29 of 30 shots and Adam Edstrom scored the go-ahead goal in the third period to lead New York to a victory over host Vegas.

Vincent Trocheck also scored for New York, which improved to 4-1-1 over its last six games with its second straight win.

Mark Stone scored for Vegas, which lost back-to-back games for the first time since Nov. 17 and 20 against Washington and Toronto. The Golden Knights, who lost for just the sixth time in 23 home games (17-6-0), also fell to 6-8-1 against Eastern Conference opponents.

Flames 2, Kings 1

Matt Coronato tallied a goal and an assist while goaltender Dustin Wolf delivered a sparkling performance to give host Calgary a comeback victory over Los Angeles.

Jonathan Huberdeau also scored for Calgary, which has won two consecutive games. Wolf made 31 saves, 16 of them in the first period while his team appeared overmatched from the drop of the puck.

For good measure, Wolf provided a couple of late clutch stops on Phillip Danault, the first on a deflected point shot and the second a sprawling stop on the rebound attempt with the game on the line.

Wild 3, Sharks 1

Marc-Andre Fleury made 36 saves for visiting Minnesota in a win against San Jose.

Mats Zuccarello had a goal and two assists, Matt Boldy had a goal and an assist and Marco Rossi also scored for the Wild, who have won five of six.

William Eklund scored and Yaroslav Askarov made 19 saves for the Sharks, who have dropped three in a row and 11 of 13.

Canucks 3, Maple Leafs 0

Kevin Lankinen made 20 saves to earn his fourth shutout of the season and visiting Vancouver defeated Toronto.

Quinn Hughes had a goal and an assist for the Canucks. Brock Boeser and Kiefer Sherwood also scored, and Tyler Myers added two assists.

Lankinen's seventh career shutout helped the Canucks to improve to 1-1-2 with one game left on their five-game road trip.

Jets 3, Avalanche 0

Connor Hellebuyck made 22 saves to post his NHL-leading sixth shutout of the season and 43rd of his career, lifting host Winnipeg over Colorado.

Nikolaj Ehlers scored two goals and Mark Scheifele also scored to record his 50th point of the season, marking his 10th consecutive season reaching that plateau.

Hellebuyck, who leads the NHL in wins (26), turned aside all seven shots he faced in the third period to preserve his second shutout of the season versus the Avalanche. The two-time Vezina Trophy recipient made 35 saves in Winnipeg's 1-0 win over Colorado on Nov. 7.

Capitals 4, Predators 1

Ethen Frank scored his first NHL goal to break a 1-1 tie in the third period and visiting Washington went on to defeat Nashville.

Alex Ovechkin scored an empty-net goal with 59 seconds remaining in the third to move within 21 goals of matching Wayne Gretzky (894) for the most in league history.

With his marker on Saturday, Ovechkin joined Gordie Howe (22 seasons) as the only players in NHL history to score at least 20 goals in 20 consecutive seasons.

Frank, who had an assist in his NHL debut on Friday, took a stretch pass from Matt Roy, got behind the defense and slid the puck between the pads of Juuse Saros to give the Capitals a 2-1 lead at 8:30 of the third period.

Kraken 6, Sabres 2

Kaapo Kakko scored twice as Seattle rallied from a two-goal deficit to defeat host Buffalo.

Oliver Bjorkstrand sparked Seattle, which was winless in its previous four games (0-3-1), with a rare fight, and later scored the go-ahead goal. Ryker Evans, Andre Burakovsky and Brandon Tanev also tallied, and Chandler Stephenson, Josh Mahura and Jared McCann had two assists apiece.

Goaltender Joey Daccord, who was making his first start since Dec. 22 because of an upper-body injury, made 33 saves.

Senators 5, Penguins 0

Leevi Merilainen notched 30 saves for his first career shutout and Shane Pinto scored twice in Ottawa's win over host Pittsburgh.

Tyler Kleven, Drake Batherson and Tim Stutzle added goals and Claude Giroux had three assists for the Senators, who snapped an 0-3-1 skid.

Alex Nedeljkovic stopped 12 of 17 shots before being replaced by Tristan Jarry 7:06 into the second period. Jarry made five saves for the Penguins, who are 1-2-3 in their last six.

Flyers 6, Ducks 0

Travis Konecny recorded four assists and Samuel Ersson made 22 saves to guide Philadelphia to an emphatic home victory over Anaheim.

Five different Flyers registered a goal and an assist, including former Ducks defenseman Jamie Drysdale, as the team snapped a four-game losing streak. Joining Drysdale with a two-point performance in front of an electric home crowd were Garnet Hathaway, Morgan Frost, Ryan Poehling and Owen Tippett.

SATURDAY'S SUMMARIES

Philadelphia 6, Anaheim 0

Anaheim	0	0	0 –	0
Philadelphia	2	1	3 –	6

First Period–1, Philadelphia, Frost 9 (Konecny, Tippett), 6:48. 1, Philadelphia, Drysdale 2 (Konecny, Frost), 18:11. Penalties–Anaheim bench, served by McTavish (Too Many Men), 9:44. Strome, ANA (Tripping), 17:05. McTavish, ANA (Roughing), 19:20. Fabbri, ANA (Roughing), 19:20. Laughton, PHI (Roughing), 19:20. Hathaway, PHI (Roughing), 19:20. Sanheim, PHI (Roughing), 20:00. Johnston, ANA (Roughing), 20:00. Johnston, ANA (Roughing), 20:00.
Second Period–1, Philadelphia, Tippett 12 (Konecny), 16:12. Penalties–Frost, PHI (Tripping), 8:29. Vatrano, ANA (Roughing), 16:57. Laughton, PHI (Roughing), 16:57.
Third Period–1, Philadelphia, Poehling 4 (Hathaway, Sanheim), 0:24. 1, Philadelphia, Michkov 13 (Konecny, Drysdale), 7:36. 1, Philadelphia, Hathaway 4 (Poehling, Laughton), 8:55. Penalties–Michkov, PHI (Roughing), 2:44. Gudas, ANA (Roughing), 2:44. Gudas, ANA (Roughing), 6:35. Seeler, PHI (Roughing), 6:35. Strome, ANA (Cross-checking), 6:35. Gudas, ANA (Misconduct), 6:35.
Shots on Goal–Anaheim 7-7-8–22. Philadelphia 14-5-11–30.
Power-play opportunities–Anaheim 0 of 1; Philadelphia 2 of 4.
Goalies–Anaheim, Gibson 7-6-2 (30 shots-24 saves). Philadelphia, Ersson 10-7-2 (22-22). A–19,154 (19,523).

Vancouver 3, Toronto 0

Vancouver	1	1	1 –	3
Toronto	0	0	0 –	0

First Period–1, Vancouver, Boeser 15 (Myers, Pettersson), 0:31. Penalties–Suter, VAN (Tripping), 2:23. Myers, VAN (Tripping), 17:47.
Second Period–1, Vancouver, Hughes 9, 18:12. Penalties–Miller, VAN (High-sticking), 14:59.
Third Period–1, Vancouver, Sherwood 13 (Hughes, Myers), 0:47. Penalties–None.
Shots on Goal–Vancouver 9-5-4–18. Toronto 9-6-5–20.
Power-play opportunities–Vancouver 0 of 0; Toronto 0 of 3.
Goalies–Vancouver, Lankinen 16-7-6 (20 shots-20 saves). Toronto, Hildeby 3-2-0 (18-15). A–19,104 (18,819).

Dallas 2, Montreal 1 (SO)

Dallas	0	1	0	1 –	2
Montreal	0	1	0	0 –	1

Dallas won shootout 1-0
First Period–None. Penalties–Dumba, DAL (Roughing), 7:14. Anderson, MTL (Roughing), 7:14.
Second Period–1, Montreal, Laine 9 (Suzuki, Hutson), 15:14. 1, Dallas, Benn 12 (Bourque), 17:34. Penalties–Dumba, DAL (Cross-checking), 14:26. Blackwell, DAL (Tripping), 15:00.
Third Period–None. Penalties–Bourque, DAL (Slashing), 4:42.
Overtime–None. Penalties–None.
Shootout–Dallas 1 (Robertson G, Johnston NG), Montreal 0 (Laine NG, Caufield NG, Suzuki NG).
Shots on Goal–Dallas 16-7-8-4–35. Montreal 7-12-11-1–31.
Power-play opportunities–Dallas 0 of 1; Montreal 1 of 3.
Goalies–Dallas, Oettinger 21-9-1 (31 shots-30 saves). Montreal, Montembeault (35-34). A–21,105 (21,273).

Ottawa 5, Pittsburgh 0

Ottawa	3	2	0 –	5
Pittsburgh	0	0	0 –	0

First Period–1, Ottawa, Kleven 2 (Giroux, Gaudette), 3:16. 1, Ottawa, Pinto 7 (Giroux, Chabot), 5:14. 2, Ottawa, Pinto 8 (Greig), 19:04. Penalties–Pittsburgh bench, served by Bunting (Delay of Game), 3:16. Cousins, OTT (Roughing), 7:05. Ostapchuk, OTT (Roughing), 7:05. Joseph, PIT (Roughing), 7:05. Bunting, PIT (Roughing), 7:05. Batherson, OTT (High-sticking), 8:55. Nieto, PIT (Slashing), 11:18. Stuetzle, OTT (Tripping), 11:43. Batherson, OTT (Unsportsmanlike conduct), 15:19. Reinhardt, OTT (Unsportsmanlike conduct), 15:19. Nedeljkovic, PIT (Unsportsmanlike conduct), 15:19. Cousins, OTT (Boarding), 17:53. Crosby, PIT (Slashing), 20:00.
Second Period–1, Ottawa, Batherson 14 (Norris, Sanderson), 0:41. 1, Ottawa, Stuetzle 13 (Giroux, Jensen), 7:06. Penalties–Bunting, PIT (Tripping), 3:19. Kleven, OTT (Interference), 8:08. Cousins, OTT (Illegal Check to Head Minor), 17:09.
Third Period–None. Penalties–None.
Shots on Goal–Ottawa 7-12-3–22. Pittsburgh 8-11-10–29.
Power-play opportunities–Ottawa 2 of 4; Pittsburgh 0 of 6.
Goalies–Ottawa, Merilainen 3-2-0 (29 shots-29 saves). Pittsburgh, Nedeljkovic 7-7-4 (17-12), Jarry (5-5). A–18,043 (18,087).

Winnipeg 3, Colorado 0

Colorado	0	0	0 –	0
Winnipeg	1	1	1 –	3

First Period–1, Winnipeg, Ehlers 13 (Samberg), 1:08. Penalties–Coghlan, WPG (High-sticking), 9:01.
Second Period–1, Winnipeg, Scheifele 25 (Connor, Morrissey), 15:53. Penalties–None.
Third Period–2, Winnipeg, Ehlers 14 (Lowry, Iafallo), 19:03. Penalties–Connor, WPG (High-sticking), 4:42.
Shots on Goal–Colorado 10-5-7–22. Winnipeg 11-12-6–29.
Power-play opportunities–Colorado 0 of 2; Winnipeg 0 of 0.
Goalies–Colorado, Blackwood 14-11-4 (28 shots-26 saves). Winnipeg, Hellebuyck 26-6-2 (22-22). A–14,782 (15,294).

New Jersey 3, Tampa Bay 2 (OT)

Tampa Bay	1	0	1	0 –	2
New Jersey	1	1	0	1 –	3

First Period–1, New Jersey, Palat 10 (Hamilton, Bratt), 8:10. 1, Tampa Bay, Hedman 6 (Paul), 9:57. Penalties–None.
Second Period–1, New Jersey, Hughes 17, 15:16. Penalties–Bastian, NJD (Hooking), 8:14. Lilleberg, TBL (Hooking), 10:28. Cotter, NJD (High-sticking), 19:55.
Third Period–1, Tampa Bay, Kucherov 18 (Hagel, McDonagh), 8:05. Penalties–Dillon, NJD (High-sticking), 2:20.
Overtime–1, New Jersey, Noesen 17 (Bratt, Hughes), 3:19. Penalties–Paul, TBL (Tripping), 1:44.
Shots on Goal–Tampa Bay 9-7-9-0–25. New Jersey 14-6-1-5–26.
Power-play opportunities–Tampa Bay 0 of 3; New Jersey 1 of 2.
Goalies–Tampa Bay, Vasilevskiy (26 shots-23 saves). New Jersey, Markstrom 21-8-3 (25-23). A–16,514 (17,625).

Seattle 6, Buffalo 2

Seattle	0	2	4 –	6
Buffalo	2	0	0 –	2

First Period–1, Buffalo, Lafferty 2 (Krebs, Peterka), 2:37. 1, Buffalo, Quinn 8 (Dahlin, Peterka), 17:17. Penalties–McLeod, BUF (Tripping), 9:47. Beniers, SEA (High-sticking), 16:29. Bjorkstrand, SEA (Fighting), 17:42. Gilbert, BUF (Fighting), 17:42. Gilbert, BUF (Roughing), 17:42. Kakko, SEA (Stick Holding), 19:07.
Second Period–1, Seattle, Evans 5 (Stephenson), 12:48. 1, Seattle, Burakovsky 4 (Mahura, Stephenson), 19:12. Penalties–Bryson, BUF (Tripping), 2:36. Kartye, SEA (Roughing), 5:24. Dahlin, BUF (Roughing), 5:24. Stephenson, SEA (Tripping), 20:00.
Third Period–1, Seattle, Bjorkstrand 12, 3:08. 1, Seattle, Kakko 6 (Mahura, Schwartz), 3:46. 2, Seattle, Kakko 7 (McCann, Wright), 5:26. 1, Seattle, Tanev 8 (McCann, Oleksiak), 16:25. Penalties–Dahlin, BUF (Tripping), 4:17. Montour, SEA (Slashing), 12:04.
Shots on Goal–Seattle 7-14-9–30. Buffalo 15-9-11–35.
Power-play opportunities–Seattle 1 of 4; Buffalo 1 of 5.
Goalies–Seattle, Daccord 13-9-2 (35 shots-33 saves). Buffalo, Luukkonen 13-13-4 (29-24). A–16,759 (19,070).

Minnesota 3, San Jose 1

Minnesota	1	1	1 –	3
San Jose	0	1	0 –	1

First Period–1, Minnesota, Rossi 16 (Zuccarello, Boldy), 5:51. Penalties–Middleton, MIN (Delay of Game), 6:03.
Second Period–1, Minnesota, Boldy 16 (Zuccarello), 4:34. 1, San Jose, Eklund 9 (Celebrini, Walman), 17:30. Penalties–None.
Third Period–1, Minnesota, Zuccarello 11 (Chisholm), 18:43. Penalties–Foligno, MIN (Slashing), 19:10.
Shots on Goal–Minnesota 6-9-7–22. San Jose 16-13-8–37.
Power-play opportunities–Minnesota 0 of 0; San Jose 0 of 2.
Goalies–Minnesota, Fleury 9-3-1 (37 shots-36 saves). San Jose, Askarov 3-3-2 (22-19). A–17,435 (17,562).

N.Y. Islanders 2, Utah 1

N.Y. Islanders	0	0	2 –	2
Utah	0	1	0 –	1

First Period–None. Penalties–Stenlund, UTA (Tripping), 1:27. Hayton, UTA (Tripping), 18:39.
Second Period–1, Utah, Schmaltz 8 (Kesselring, Cooley), 1:13. Penalties–Dobson, NYI (Roughing), 14:20. Pelech, NYI (High-sticking), 18:47. Hayton, UTA (Unsportsmanlike conduct), 18:47.
Third Period–1, N.Y. Islanders, Nelson 12 (Lee, Barzal), 3:36. 1, N.Y. Islanders, Barzal 4 (Lee, Pulock), 18:35. Penalties–Kesselring, UTA (High-sticking), 5:49. Lee, NYI (Goaltender Interference), 13:32.
Shots on Goal–N.Y. Islanders 14-5-13–32. Utah 5-10-7–22.
Power-play opportunities–N.Y. Islanders 0 of 3; Utah 0 of 2.
Goalies–N.Y. Islanders, Hogberg 1-1-0 (22 shots-21 saves). Utah, Ingram 6-5-3 (32-30). A–11,131 (0).

Boston 4, Florida 3 (OT)

Boston	1	1	1	1 –	4
Florida	1	0	2	0 –	3

First Period–1, Boston, Geekie 10 (Lohrei, Pastrnak), 6:02. 1, Florida, Rodrigues 8 (Balinskis, Lundell), 15:29. Penalties–Lundell, FLA (Holding), 4:50. Luostarinen, FLA (Holding), 11:07. Lohrei, BOS (Holding), 13:30. Marchand, BOS (High-sticking), 17:05. Schmidt, FLA (Holding), 17:05. Geekie, BOS (Slashing), 19:00.
Second Period–1, Boston, Pastrnak 18 (Geekie, Frederic), 16:11. Penalties–Frederic, BOS (Roughing), 9:29. Greer, FLA (Roughing), 9:29. Peeke, BOS (Cross-checking), 13:33.
Third Period–1, Florida, Reinhart 24 (Barkov, Forsling), 0:43. 1, Boston, Wahlstrom 3 (McAvoy, Brazeau), 2:06. 2, Florida, Reinhart 25 (Bennett, Tkachuk), 19:57. Penalties–Luostarinen, FLA (Slashing), 3:02.
Overtime–2, Boston, Pastrnak 19 (Lohrei, Lindholm), 4:58. Penalties–Bennett, FLA (High-sticking), 3:18.
Shots on Goal–Boston 6-4-6-2–18. Florida 14-14-13-2–43.
Power-play opportunities–Boston 2 of 5; Florida 1 of 3.
Goalies–Boston, Swayman 14-15-3 (43 shots-40 saves). Florida, Bobrovsky (18-14). A–19,687 (19,250).

N.Y. Rangers 2, Vegas 1

N.Y. Rangers	0	1	1 –	2
Vegas	0	1	0 –	1

First Period–None. Penalties–None.
Second Period–1, Vegas, Stone 12 (Eichel, Hertl), 6:16. 1, N.Y. Rangers, Trocheck 14 (Zibanejad, Panarin), 9:54. Penalties–Trocheck, NYR (Stick Holding), 6:08. Kolesar, VGK (Tripping), 8:30.
Third Period–1, N.Y. Rangers, Edstrom 3 (Brodzinski, Rempe), 5:57. Penalties–Smith, NYR (Tripping), 6:09. Vaakanainen, NYR (Hooking), 17:05.
Shots on Goal–N.Y. Rangers 12-12-2–26. Vegas 6-12-12–30.
Power-play opportunities–N.Y. Rangers 1 of 1; Vegas 1 of 3.
Goalies–N.Y. Rangers, Shesterkin 13-15-1 (30 shots-29 saves). Vegas, Samsonov 11-4-1 (26-24).
A–18,144 (17,368).

Washington 4, Nashville 1

Washington	0	1	3 –	4
Nashville	0	1	0 –	1

First Period–None. Penalties–None.
Second Period–1, Washington, Wilson 19 (Strome, Ovechkin), 9:03. 1, Nashville, Forsberg 11 (Marchessault, Josi), 16:14. Penalties–Blankenburg, NSH (Tripping), 0:41. Josi, NSH (Hooking), 7:56. Raddysh, WSH (Holding), 15:32.
Third Period–1, Washington, Frank 1 (Roy, Fehervary), 8:30. 1, Washington, Mangiapane 10 (Duhaime, Carlson), 14:54. 1, Washington, Ovechkin 20, 19:01. Penalties–McMichael, WSH (Tripping), 10:49. Fehervary, WSH (Hooking), 19:43.
Shots on Goal–Washington 5-3-8–16. Nashville 8-12-13–33.
Power-play opportunities–Washington 1 of 2; Nashville 1 of 3.
Goalies–Washington, Thompson 18-2-3 (33 shots-32 saves). Nashville, Saros 9-18-6 (15-12). A–17,159 (17,113).

Calgary 2, L.A. Kings 1

L.A. Kings	1	0	0 –	1
Calgary	0	1	1 –	2

First Period–1, L.A. Kings, Moverare 1, 6:19. Penalties–Weegar, CGY (Slashing), 0:57. Byfield, LAK (Holding), 3:28. Fiala, LAK (Slashing), 17:10.
Second Period–1, Calgary, Coronato 10 (Coleman), 8:58. Penalties–Andersson, CGY (Interference), 4:37. Danault, LAK (Roughing), 9:12. Weegar, CGY (Roughing), 9:12. Jeannot, LAK (Fighting), 13:05. Lomberg, CGY (Fighting), 13:05. Weegar, CGY (Tripping), 17:43.
Third Period–1, Calgary, Huberdeau 18 (Coronato, Kadri), 4:36. Penalties–Clarke, LAK (Interference), 3:16. Burroughs, LAK (Fighting), 8:11. Lomberg, CGY (Fighting), 8:11. Gavrikov, LAK (Tripping), 18:12.
Shots on Goal–L.A. Kings 17-5-10–32. Calgary 4-6-8–18.
Power-play opportunities–L.A. Kings 0 of 3; Calgary 1 of 4.
Goalies–L.A. Kings, Rittich 11-9-0 (18 shots-16 saves). Calgary, Wolf 14-6-2 (32-31). A–18,446 (19,289).

Columbus 2, St. Louis 1

Columbus	1	1	0 –	2
St. Louis	0	0	1 –	1

First Period–1, Columbus, Fantilli 10 (Marchenko, Voronkov), 15:38. Penalties–None.
Second Period–1, Columbus, Sillinger 7 (van Riemsdyk, Del Bel Belluz), 16:51. Penalties–Sundqvist, STL (Holding), 14:57. Olivier, CBJ (Roughing), 17:11. Sundqvist, STL (Hooking), 19:01.
Third Period–1, St. Louis, Parayko 8 (Bolduc, Faulk), 19:48. Penalties–Labanc, CBJ (Hooking), 7:50. Werenski, CBJ (Tripping), 18:23.
Shots on Goal–Columbus 11-15-4–30. St. Louis 9-8-15–32.
Power-play opportunities–Columbus 1 of 2; St. Louis 1 of 3.
Goalies–Columbus, Greaves 2-1-2 (32 shots-31 saves). St. Louis, Binnington 11-16-3 (30-28). A–17,591 (19,150).

Edmonton 4, Chicago 3

Edmonton	0	3	1 –	4
Chicago	2	1	0 –	3

First Period–1, Chicago, Teravainen 10 (Dickinson, Foligno), 4:45. 1, Chicago, Foligno 11 (Teravainen, Martinez), 15:01. Penalties–None.
Second Period–1, Edmonton, Podkolzin 5 (Arvidsson, Draisaitl), 0:22. 1, Chicago, Donato 13 (Allan, Hall), 10:03. 1, Edmonton, Henrique 6 (Emberson, Podkolzin), 15:49. 1, Edmonton, Perry 7 (Kapanen), 17:30. Penalties–Arvidsson, EDM (Slashing), 20:00. Crevier, CHI (Cross-checking), 20:00.
Third Period–1, Edmonton, Hyman 14 (Draisaitl, Bouchard), 7:18. Penalties–Allan, CHI (Tripping), 6:18. Henrique, EDM (High-sticking), 19:07.
Shots on Goal–Edmonton 9-15-10–34. Chicago 8-7-7–22.
Power-play opportunities–Edmonton 1 of 1; Chicago 0 of 1.
Goalies–Edmonton, Pickard 10-4-0 (22 shots-19 saves). Chicago, Soderblom 6-11-1 (34-30). A–19,387 (19,717).

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

MEN'S TOP 25 ROUNDUP

No. 1 Vols escape Texas with close victory

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Tennessee guard Zakai Zeigler (5) shoots against Texas on Saturday in Austin, Texas. AARON E. MARTINEZ/AMERICAN-STATESMAN - USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

Zakai Zeigler hit for 16 points, including a basket and four clutch free throws in the final minute, as No. 1 Tennessee (15-1, 2-1 SEC) outlasted Texas (11-5, 0-3) 74-70 on Saturday in a slugfest in Austin, Texas.

The back-and-forth battle was tied at 58-58 after a jumper by the Volunteers' Chaz Lanier with 5:15 to play.

Texas took a short-lived two-point lead on a basket by Jordan Pope, but the Volunteers answered with an 8-0 run, capped by Jordan Gainey's 3-pointer with 2:41 left to jump ahead 66-60.

Tre Johnson then canned a jumper from the elbow to bring Texas back to within four points, and Pope made one of two free throws with 1:30 remaining to trim the margin to 66-63.

No. 2 Auburn 66, South Carolina 63

Dylan Cardwell converted the go-ahead dunk with 1:32 remaining as Auburn (15-1, 3-0 SEC) withstood an ankle injury to star Johni Broome and escaped with a victory over South Carolina (10-6, 0-3) in Columbia, S.C.

The Tigers won their eighth straight after Broome injured his left ankle defending a shot under the rim with 13:45 remaining. Broome scored six points on 3-of-11 shooting in 24 minutes before getting hurt when he stepped on teammate Chaney Johnson's foot defending a basket by Collin Murray-Boyles that gave the Gamecocks a 47-45 lead.

On the SEC network postgame telecast Auburn coach Bruce Pearl said Broome has a "significant sprain" and will be getting tests to determine the severity.

Cardwell only scored six points but gave the Tigers a 64-63 lead when he got a pass from Tahaad Pettiford and converted the open dunk. The score marked the game's first points since a basket by Zachary Davis gave the Gamecocks a 63-62 lead with 5:12 remaining.

No. 3 Iowa State 85, Texas Tech 84 (OT)

Joshua Jefferson swished two free throws with 4.1 seconds left in overtime to lift Iowa State (14-1, 4-0 Big 12) to a triumph over Texas Tech (11-4, 2-2) in Lubbock, Texas, for the Cyclones' 11th win in a row.

Jefferson threw an inbounds pass with 8.4 seconds left in OT, got the ball back on the left block and got fouled by Darrion Williams on a move to the basket.

The last two free throws left Iowa State 6-for-6 from the free-throw line in overtime after it struggled in regulation (11-of-18).

The Red Raiders grabbed an 84-83 lead with 15.4 seconds left on the clock when Williams snatched an air-ball and banked in a blind reverse layup. That was the eighth of nine lead changes – seven of those in the closing five minutes of regulation plus overtime.

No. 4 Duke 86, Notre Dame 78

Freshman Cooper Flagg rang up 42 points and Duke (14-2, 6-0 ACC) held off visiting Notre Dame (7-9, 1-4) for a victory in Durham, N.C.

Flagg made 11 of 14 shots from the field, including a 4-for-6 mark on 3-pointers, and went 16-for-17 on free throws. He became the first Duke player to reach 40 points since J.J. Redick did it twice in January 2006 and marked the most points for any Blue Devil since Danny Ferry's 58 in 1988. Flagg also distributed a team-high seven assists and pulled in six rebounds.

Duke, which has won 10 consecutive games, posted the game's first 14 points to set the tone.

Khaman Maluach's 19 points and 10 rebounds and Kon Knueppel's 13 points also were a boost for the Blue Devils.

No. 5 Alabama 94, No. 10 Texas A&M 88

Mark Sears poured in 27 points and sunk four key free throws in the final 21 seconds as Alabama (14-2, 3-0 SEC) held off short-handed Texas A&M (13-3, 2-1) in a key conference battle in College Station, Texas.

The Crimson Tide led by eight points at halftime and by 15 with eight minutes to play but had to outlast a torrid Texas A&M rally.

The Aggies culled their deficit to 87-84 after a pair of free throws by Hayden Hefner with 1:22 left. Hefner then missed a 3-pointer from the top of the key, and Alabama's Clifford Omoruyi grabbed the rebound, was fouled and added a free throw. He missed the second free throw, but Chris Youngblood snagged the offensive rebound, which led to another two free throws.

Texas A&M's Pharrel Payne made a layup with 25 seconds left to make it a four-point game before Sears added to the Crimson Tide's lead, downing two free throws with 21 seconds left.

No. 6 Kentucky 95, No. 14 Mississippi State 90

Jaxson Robinson scored a season-high 27 points to lead Kentucky (13-3, 2-1 SEC) to a road victory over Mississippi State (14-2, 2-1) in Starkville, Miss.

Ansley Almonor, who finished with 11, hit a pair of 3-pointers in the second half for the Wildcats to answer a big run from the Bulldogs and give Kentucky coach Mark Pope career win No. 200.

The Wildcats, coming off a loss Tuesday at unranked Georgia, led by as much as 14 points with 15 minutes remaining in regulation, only to see the Bulldogs rally to take the lead with eight minutes remaining. However, Kentucky made 16-of-32 from beyond the arc to pull out a big victory on the road.

Robinson, who finished making 9-of-12 shots and 7-of-10 from the 3-point line, scored 16 in the first half for the Wildcats, helping the guests take a 49-44 lead into halftime. A 9-0 run early in the second half extended the lead to 65-51 after an Andrew Carr three-point play with 15:55 left.

No. 8 Florida 71, Arkansas 63

Alijah Martin scored 14 points and Alex Condon notched a double-double of 12 points and 10 rebounds as Florida (15-1, 2-1 SEC) topped host Arkansas (11-5, 0-3) in Fayetteville, Ark.

Will Richard added 12 points and eight boards for the Gators, who led by as many as 12. Walter Clayton Jr. had 12 points and five assists. Condon scored all of his points after halftime

Adou Thiero scored a game-high 17 points to pace the Razorbacks. Boogie Fland followed with 15 points and Jonas Aidoo had 11 points and nine rebounds.

No. 9 UConn 68, Georgetown 60

Alex Karaban scored 19 points as UConn (13-4, 5-1 Big East) used a strong second-half run to defeat Georgetown (12-4, 3-2) in Washington, D.C.

Karaban scored 12 in the second half, connecting on 3 of 3 3-point attempts, as UConn bounced back from a 68-66 loss at Villanova on Wednesday.

Solo Ball added 15 points as the Huskies, who have won nine of their last 10 games overall, have won nine straight over longtime conference rival Georgetown.

UConn started the second half on a 17-2 run to take a commanding 52-33 lead after a Samson Johnson dunk with 14:31 left. Johnson finished with nine points and five rebounds.

No. 11 Kansas 54, Cincinnati 40

Hunter Dickinson had 14 points and 12 rebounds and Kansas (12-3, 3-1 Big 12) displayed stifling second-half defense to post a win over host Cincinnati (10-5, 0-4).

Kansas overcame 2-for-21 shooting from beyond the arc to record their third straight win and fifth in six contests. The Jayhawks shot 35.3 percent from the field.

Dillon Mitchell had 10 points and was the only player in double figures for Cincinnati, which shot just 3-for-22 from 3-point range and 30.5 percent from the field.

Both teams went through ice-cold stretches in the second half. Cincinnati didn't register a second-half basket until Arrinten Page hit a jumper with 14:27 left while Kansas went four minutes without a basket early in the second half.

No. 12 Houston 87, Kansas St. 57

Houston (12-3, 4-0 Big 12) used a well-balanced scoring attack, led by Emanuel Sharp's 15 points, and defeated Kansas State (7-8, 1-3) in Manhattan, Kan. The Cougars had five players in double figures and two others with eight points.

Houston is tied with Iowa State atop the Big 12 standings and has won eight straight. Kansas State has lost six of its last seven games.

Houston had held seven straight opponents to 55 or fewer points, a Big 12 record, but Kansas State eclipsed that total.

Besides Sharp, the Cougars got 13 points from Joseph Tugler, 11 each from LJ Cryer and Ja'Vie Francis and 10 from J'Wan Roberts.

USC 82, No. 13 Illinois 72

Desmond Claude scored a season-high 31 points and visiting Southern California (10-6, 2-3 Big Ten) took control in the second half of a victory over Illinois (12-4, 4-2) in Champaign, Ill.

Claude scored 21 points after halftime to help USC end a 19-game road losing streak against ranked teams since beating Tennessee in December, 2010. Claude made 12 of 20 shots and took 18 attempts inside the 3-point line to finish five shy of his career high set when he played at Xavier.

Wesley Yates III added 15 points on 7 of 8 shooting as the Trojans shot 52.3 percent and converted 19 layups and dunks after double-digit losses to Michigan and Indiana. Rashaun Agee contributed 13 points and hit three 3-pointers as the Trojans were 5 of 14 (35.7 percent) from deep after missing 20 of 26 attempts Wednesday at Indiana.

Illinois played without leading scorer Kasparas Jakucionis for the second straight game due to a left forearm injury. Jakucionis warmed up but watched the game in uniform as the Ilini were nowhere near as efficient as they were in Wednesday's 91-52 rout of Penn State.

Georgia 72, No. 17 Oklahoma 62

Asa Newell and Dakota Leffew scored 15 points apiece, leading Georgia (14-2, 2-1 SEC) to a win over Oklahoma (13-3, 0-3) in Athens, Ga.

Silas Demary Jr. added 10 points and eight rebounds for Georgia, which won its second game in a row after beating No. 6 Kentucky on Tuesday.

Jalon Moore led Oklahoma with 17 points and nine rebounds before fouling out. Kobe Elvis and Duke Miles scored 14 points apiece and Mohamed Wague chipped in 10 points off the bench as the Sooners dropped their third game in a row.

After trailing 36-33 at halftime, the Bulldogs scored the first six points of the second half and later took a 42-38 lead on Newell's three-point play. Oklahoma then retook the lead with a 10-3 run that started with 3-pointers from Brycen Goodine and Elvis.

No. 18 Gonzaga 88, Washington State 75

Graham Ike posted 21 points to lead five Gonzaga scorers in double figures as the Bulldogs (14-4, 5-0 West Coast Conference) pulled away in the second half for a win over Washington State (13-5, 3-2) in Spokane, Wash.

Nolan Hickman added 19 points, while Ben Gregg stuffed the stat sheet with 11 points, nine rebounds and five assists. Khalif Battle and reserve Braden Huff each chipped in 10 points for the Bulldogs.

Gonzaga canned 55.7 percent of its field-goal attempts, including 10 of 21 from behind the 3-point line. It entered the second half with a three-point lead and upped its advantage to 23 at one point, overmatching its in-state rival with efficient execution and balance.

Nate Calmese scored 20 points on 9-of-14 shooting and dished out a game-high eight assists for the Cougars, who lost their second straight game. LeJuan Watts added 17 points, and Eastern Washington transfer Dane Erikstrup chipped in 11.

No. 19 Memphis 74, East Carolina 70

PJ Haggerty scored 25 points and Memphis (13-3, 3-0 American Athletic Conference) offered a definition of an ugly win in defeating visiting East Carolina (9-8, 1-3).

The Tigers built an 18-point lead in the first half and were still ahead by 14 at the break, before the Pirates hung around by scoring the first nine points of the second half.

East Carolina eventually pulled within four with 13:54 remaining, and then within two at 54-52 on a jumper by RJ Felton with 8:03 to play.

The Pirates tied the game 68-68 on C.J. Walker's three-point play with 1:11 to play.

No. 23 Ole Miss 77, LSU 65

Malik Dia scored 19 points and Ole Miss (14-2, 3-0 SEC) used a strong second half to pull away to a victory against LSU (11-5, 0-3) in Oxford, Miss.

Jaemyn Brakefield added 16 points, Sean Pedulla scored 11, Dre Davis and Jaylen Murray scored 10 each for the Rebels, who outscored the Tigers 49-39 in the second half.

Cam Carter scored 16 points, Daimion Collins had 14 and Jordan Sears, coming off the bench for the first time this season, had 10 points and six assists for LSU.

The Rebels enjoyed a 23-11 advantage in points off turnovers as the Tigers struggled in that area for the third straight game, having been outscored by nine points both times in losses to Vanderbilt and Missouri.

No. 25 Utah St. 81, Boise St. 79

Ian Martinez completed a go-ahead four-point play with 7.3 seconds left, helping Utah State (16-1, 6-0 Mountain West Confrence) earn a win over Boise State (12-5, 4-2) in Logan, Utah.

Martinez led the Aggies with 18 points, while Deyton Albury scored 14. Drake Allen added 13 points, followed by Dexter Akanno's 12 and Mason Falslev's 10.

Utah State, which won its sixth straight game, shot 61.2 percent from the field and made 11 of its 21 3-point attempts (52.4 percent).

Tyson Degenhart's 22 points paced Boise State. Alvaro Cardenas had 15 points and eight assists, while Javan Buchanan chipped in 13 and Andrew Meadow scored 12. The Broncos dropped their second game in two tries following a five-game winning streak.

Leading by four at halftime, Boise State grew its advantage to 13 after Cardenas' layup stamped a 9-0 Broncos run to start the second half. After Julian Bowie's 3-pointer gave Boise State a 53-41 lead, Falslev's mid-range jumper began a 6-0 Aggies spurt.

BASKETBALL

SATURDAY'S NBA ROUNDUP

Pistons' Cunningham nets triple-double

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Tim Hardaway Jr. scored a season-high 27 points and the host Detroit Pistons held off the Toronto Raptors 123-114 on Saturday night.

Hardaway made all but one of his eight 3-point attempts. Cade Cunningham notched a triple-double with 22 points, 17 assists and 10 rebounds as the Pistons won for the sixth time in seven games.

Malik Beasley had 18 points off the bench while Tobias Harris supplied 17 points and seven rebounds in the win. Jalen Duren added 10 points and nine rebounds.

Immanuel Quickley led seven Raptors in double figures with 25 points. Scottie Barnes had 16 points and 12 rebounds while reserves Bruce Brown and Chris Boucher added 14 points apiece. Toronto has lost five straight.

Detroit has won the first three games of the four-game season series.

Pistons guard Cade Cunningham, right, drives past Toronto Raptors forward Scottie Barnes on Saturday in Detroit. LON HORWEDEL/IMAGN IMAGES

Grizzlies 127, Timberwolves 125

Ja Morant made back-to-back baskets in the final minute to lift Memphis over Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Morant finished with 12 points on just 5-for-19 shooting but came up when it mattered most for Memphis, which won the opener of a four-game road trip. Jaren Jackson Jr. led the Grizzlies with 33 points and eight rebounds, and Desmond Bane scored 21 points.

Donte DiVincenzo scored 27 points and grabbed 10 rebounds to lead the Timberwolves, whose three-game winning streak ended. Jaden McDaniels finished with 21 points, Naz Reid added 19 points off the bench and Julius Randle had 18 points, eight rebounds and eight assists.

The Grizzlies trailed 125-121 after Rudy Gobert made a layup for the Timberwolves with 1:41 to play. That proved to be Minnesota's final points.

Jackson Jr. made a pair of free throws to cut the deficit to 125-123 with 1:32 remaining.

Suns 114, Jazz 106

Devin Booker matched his season high with six 3-pointers and scored 34 points, Kevin Durant added 25 points and Phoenix led wire-to-wire in a victory over visiting Utah.

Utah rallied from a 16-point deficit in the second quarter and trailed 91-88 with 8:36 left in the contest before Phoenix took control with an 11-0 run.

Grayson Allen made three straight 3-pointers during the burst and finished with 14 points off the bench. Phoenix improved to 3-1 since inserting Ryan Dunn and Mason Plumlee in the starting lineup in place of Bradley Beal and Jusuf Nurkic.

Booker made his first seven shots and finished shooting 12-of-20 from the field, including 6-of-12 from 3-point range. Beal scored 12 points and Dunn added 10.

Lauri Markkanen paced the Jazz with 24 points. Collin Sexton scored 20 points, Walker Kessler chipped in 16 points and 13 rebounds, and Svi Mykhailiuk and Cody Williams had 13 points apiece.

Heat 119, Trail Blazers 98

Tyler Herro made seven 3-pointers and recorded 32 points, five rebounds and five assists to lead Miami to a victory over host Portland.

Nikola Jovic added season highs of 21 points and eight rebounds as the Heat won their third consecutive game, all on the road.

Haywood Highsmith added 14 points and matched his career high of five steals, Bam Adebayo had 13 points, 11 boards and six assists and Terry Rozier and Jaime Jaquez Jr. each had 11 points for Miami.

Anfernee Simons had 28 points thanks in large part to seven 3-pointers and Shaedon Sharpe added 22 points for Portland, which lost for the fifth time in seven games. Deni Avdija added 15 points and 12 rebounds, and Kris Murray had 10 points.

Saturday's game was the fifth of Jimmy Butler's seven-game suspension from the Heat for "conduct detrimental to the team."

Miami connected on 47.8 percent of its shots from the floor and was 19-for-44 from 3-point range.

Rockets at Hawks, ppd.

Severe weather and hazardous icy conditions in the Atlanta area forced the postponement of the game scheduled for Saturday afternoon between the host Hawks and Houston Rockets.

The NBA announced the postponement and said the game would be rescheduled for a date to be announced later.

Spurs at Lakers, ppd.
Hornets at Clippers, ppd.

After postponing the Lakers home game on Thursday against the Charlotte Hornets due to the fires, the NBA announced late on Friday it had also postponed the Lakers and Clippers home games that been scheduled for Saturday.

SATURDAY'S NBA BOX SCORES

Phoenix 114, Utah 106

UTAH (106)

Markkanen 7-18 7-8 24, Potter 2-3 0-0 5, Kessler 7-9 2-3 16, Collier 2-5 0-0 5, Sexton 8-17 3-4 20, Filipowski 2-8 0-0 4, Williams 5-10 1-3 13, Mykhailiuk 6-15 0-0 13, Eubanks 2-5 0-0 4, Mills 1-5 0-0 2, Harkless 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 42-96 13-18 106.

PHOENIX (114)

Dunn 4-8 1-2 10, Durant 11-19 2-3 25, Plumlee 2-5 2-4 6, Booker 12-20 4-4 34, Jones 0-4 0-0 0, Beal 4-10 3-4 12, Allen 5-11 0-0 14, Ighodaro 4-6 1-2 9, Okogie 1-2 0-0 2, Morris 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 44-86 13-19 114.

UTA	27	27	25	27	–	106
PHX	31	34	22	27	–	114

3-Point Goals: Utah 9-42 (Markkanen 3-12, Williams 2-4, Potter 1-2, Collier 1-2, Sexton 1-6, Mykhailiuk 1-8, Harkless 0-1, Mills 0-2, Filipowski 0-5), Phoenix 13-37 (Booker 6-12, Allen 4-10, Dunn 1-3, Durant 1-4, Beal 1-5, Jones 0-3). Fouled Out: None. Rebounds: Utah 50 (Kessler 13), Phoenix 38 (Plumlee 10). Assists: Utah 26 (Collier 8), Phoenix 26 (Durant 7). Total Fouls: Utah 18, Phoenix 17. A: 17,071 (18,055)

Detroit 123, Toronto 114

TORONTO (114)

Barnes 5-14 5-6 16, Barrett 4-16 2-6 10, Poeltl 4-10 0-4 8, Dick 4-11 1-1 13, Quickley 7-20 7-7 25, Boucher 5-6 0-0 14, Brown 6-9 0-0 14, Shead 3-3 3-3 10, Olynyk 2-3 0-0 4, Walter 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 40-92 18-27 114.

DETROIT (123)

Harris 6-12 3-3 17, Thompson 2-5 1-2 6, Duren 3-4 4-4 10, Cunningham 8-17 4-5 22, Hardaway Jr. 9-13 2-3 27, Beasley 6-10 2-4 18, Stewart 3-6 0-0 6, Fontecchio 4-8 0-0 9, Holland II 1-5 0-0 3, Sasser 2-4 0-0 5. Totals 44-84 16-21 123.

TOR	32	34	27	21	–	114
DET	32	33	34	24	–	123

3-Point Goals: Toronto 16-38 (Boucher 4-5, Dick 4-8, Quickley 4-9, Brown 2-2, Shead 1-1, Barnes 1-4, Olynyk 0-1, Barrett 0-8), Detroit 19-33 (Hardaway Jr. 7-8, Beasley 4-5, Cunningham 2-4, Harris 2-5, Sasser 1-2, Thompson 1-2, Fontecchio 1-3, Holland II 1-4). Fouled Out: None. Rebounds: Toronto 45 (Barnes, Poeltl 12), Detroit 46 (Cunningham 10). Assists: Toronto 27 (Olynyk, Shead 5), Detroit 35 (Cunningham 17). Total Fouls: Toronto 21, Detroit 22. A: 19,011 (21,000)

Memphis 127, Minnesota 125

MEMPHIS (127)

Jackson Jr. 13-24 5-7 33, Wells 4-13 2-3 13, Edey 3-7 1-1 8, Bane 8-14 1-1 21, Morant 5-19 2-2 12, Kennard 3-8 3-3 11, Clarke 5-6 0-0 10, Pippen Jr. 2-4 1-2 5, Aldama 4-7 0-0 11, LaRavia 1-3 0-0 3, Huff 0-3 0-0 0. Totals 48-108 15-19 127.

MINNESOTA (125)

McDaniels 9-12 0-0 21, Randle 7-13 3-4 18, Gobert 6-6 0-2 12, DiVincenzo 9-14 3-3 27, Edwards 4-13 7-7 15, Reid 7-10 0-0 19, Alexander-Walker 3-10 1-3 8, Conley 1-4 0-0 3, Minott 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 47-83 14-19 125.

MEM	35	29	35	28	–	127
MIN	33	32	38	22	–	125

3-Point Goals: Memphis 16-41 (Bane 4-8, Aldama 3-4, Wells 3-9, Kennard 2-4, Jackson Jr. 2-5, LaRavia 1-2, Edey 1-2, Huff 0-3, Morant 0-4), Minnesota 17-42 (DiVincenzo 6-11, Reid 5-7, McDaniels 3-4, Conley 1-3, Randle 1-5, Alexander-Walker 1-7, Edwards 0-5). Fouled Out: None. Rebounds: Memphis 46 (Edey 9), Minnesota 41 (DiVincenzo 10). Assists: Memphis 25 (Bane, Kennard 5), Minnesota 37 (Randle 8). Total Fouls: Memphis 20, Minnesota 16. A: 18,978 (19,356)

Miami 119, Portland 98

MIAMI (119)

Highsmith 5-8 0-0 14, Jaquez Jr. 4-9 3-5 11, Adebayo 6-13 0-0 13, Herro 11-22 3-4 32, Rozier 4-9 2-2 11, Jovic 8-12 1-1 21, Robinson 2-8 2-2 8, Ware 3-6 1-2 7, Larsson 1-4 0-0 2, Burks 0-1 0-0 0, Johnson 0-0 0-0 0, Christopher 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 44-92 12-16 119.

PORTLAND (98)

Avdija 5-14 4-4 15, Camara 2-7 2-4 6, Clingan 4-6 0-0 8, Sharpe 7-20 5-6 22, Simons 10-23 1-1 28, Henderson 1-6 1-4 3, Reath 1-6 0-0 3, Murray 5-7 0-0 10, Banton 0-1 0-0 0, Minaya 0-1 0-0 0, Walker 1-2 0-0 3, McGowens 0-1 0-0 0, Rupert 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 36-95 13-19 98.

MIA	29	37	28	25	–	119
POR	23	25	35	15	–	98

3-Point Goals: Miami 19-44 (Herro 7-14, Highsmith 4-5, Jovic 4-7, Robinson 2-5, Adebayo 1-2, Rozier 1-5, Burks 0-1, Jaquez Jr. 0-1, Larsson 0-2, Ware 0-2), Portland 13-45 (Simons 7-14, Sharpe 3-8, Walker 1-2, Avdija 1-4, Reath 1-6, Murray 0-1, McGowens 0-1, Clingan 0-1, Rupert 0-1, Camara 0-3, Henderson 0-4). Fouled Out: None. Rebounds: Miami 43 (Adebayo 11), Portland 51 (Avdija 12). Assists: Miami 31 (Adebayo 6), Portland 24 (Avdija, Sharpe 5). Total Fouls: Miami 16, Portland 15. A: 17,505 (19,980)

League Leaders
Scoring Averages

	GP	PTS	AVG
Antetokounmpo, MIL	30	950	31.7
Jokic, DEN	32	1012	31.6
Gilgeous-Alexander, OKC	37	1165	31.5
Tatum, BOS	35	972	27.8
Durant, PHX	26	707	27.2
Fox, SAC	35	933	26.7
Davis, LAL	34	878	25.8
Edwards, MIN	37	950	25.7
Maxey, PHI	30	770	25.7
Towns, NYK	36	909	25.3
Wembanyama, SAS	32	804	25.1
Brunson, NYK	38	952	25.1
Lillard, MIL	29	723	24.9
Booker, PHX	31	757	24.4
Irving, DAL	30	729	24.3
Cunningham, DET	34	825	24.3
Brown, BOS	31	746	24.1
James, LAL	33	787	23.9
Powell, LAC	30	712	23.7

WOMEN'S TOP 25 ROUNDUP

Oklahoma State surprises No. 17 West Virginia

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Stailee Heard scored seven of her 18 points in the fourth quarter as Oklahoma State knocked off No. 17 West Virginia 64-57 in a Big 12 matchup on Saturday.

Anna Gret Asi added 12 points, Micah Gray contributed 11 points and Alexia Smith chipped in 12 rebounds for the Cowgirls (14-2, 4-1 Big 12). Oklahoma State outscored West Virginia 17-7 in the third quarter to turn a five-point deficit into a five-point lead.

Oklahoma State led by as many as 11 points in the fourth, but West Virginia pulled within three points twice, the latest on Ja'Naiya Quinerly's jumper with 1:53 to play. Heard answered with a jumper, and Alexia Smith added two free throws as the Cowgirls closed it out.

Kylee Blacksten led the Mountaineers (13-3, 3-2) with 16 points, and Quinerly added four rebounds and four steals.

No. 7 UConn 73, Georgetown 55

The Huskies outscored the Hoyas 40-25 in the middle quarters and coasted to the Big East win in Washington, D.C.

Azzi Fudd netted 21 points on 8-of-13 shooting, and Sarah Strong collected 16 points, nine rebounds, six assists and three steals for UConn (15-2, 6-0 Big East). Ashlynn Shade chipped in 12 points, and Jana El Alfy had four blocks.

Khadee Hession scored 22 points and shot 8 of 14 from the floor, including 6 of 8 on 3-point attempts. Victoria Rivera added 10 points and Kelsey Ransom supplied nine points, eight rebounds and three steals.

UConn's Azzi Fudd shoots over Georgetown's Kelsey Ransom on Saturday in Washington. GREG FIUME/GETTY IMAGES

No. 8 Maryland 83, Wisconsin 68

The Terrapins put together a 14-0 burst in the fourth quarter to shake off Wisconsin in the Big Ten game in Madison, Wis.

Four players accounted for all but eight of Maryland's points. Shyanne Sellers and Bri McDaniel led the way with 21 points apiece. Kaylene Smikle added 18 points and Christina Dalce 15 for the Terrapins (15-1, 5-1 Big Ten).

Serah Williams scored 24 points, Lily Krahn netted 16 and Natalie Leuzinger 10 for Wisconsin (10-7, 1-5), which has lost five games in a row.

No. 11 TCU 69, Texas Tech 43

With Hailey Van Lith scoring 22 points and Sedona Prince adding 20, the Horned Frogs duo nearly outscored the visiting Lady Raiders by themselves in the Big 12 Conference contest in Lubbock, Texas.

Van Lith also contributed seven assists and Prince chipped in 10 rebounds, five blocks and three steals as TCU (17-1, 5-0 Big 12) ran its winning streak to eight games. Madison Conner chipped in 13 points.

Bailey Maupin racked up 23 points and eight rebounds for Texas Tech (12-6, 1-4), which has lost four straight.

No. 12 Kansas State 92, BYU 65

Temira Poindexter poured in 24 points and made five 3-pointers as the visiting Wildcats broke away in the second quarter and cruised past the Cougars in the Big 12 mismatch in Provo, Utah.

Poindexter, who began the night averaging 11.8 points per game, made 5 of 7 shots, including 3 of 5 from deep, for 14 points in the second quarter. Kansas State began the quarter ahead by three and ended it leading 50-32 on Poindexter's 3-pointer with two seconds left.

Ayoka Lee finished with 19 points, and Serena Sundell notched 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Wildcats (17-1, 5-0 Big 12), who have won 12 straight games.

Delaney Gibb paced BYU (10-6, 1-4) with 18 points, Emma Calvert added 13 and Heather Hamson chipped in 10.

No. 22 Utah 69, Houston 42

Maya Toure amassed 22 points on 10-of-15 shooting and added 12 rebounds, and the Utes lowered the boom on the Cougars in the second half of the Big 12 matchup.

Gianna Kneepkens also had a big game, collecting 15 points, nine rebounds and seven assists as Utah (14-3, 4-1 Big 12) bounced back from a drubbing at the hands of Kansas State on Wednesday.

The Utes outscored the Cougars 41-19 in the second half.

Laila Blair racked up 16 points for Houston (4-12, 0-5), which has lost five straight games. The Cougars shot only 25.9 percent overall, yet made 7 of 16 (43.8 percent) on 3-point attempts.

No. 25 Michigan 87, Purdue 60

The Wolverines outscored the Boilermakers by at least 10 points in handily winning the Big Ten matchup in West Lafayette, Ind.

Mila Holloway finished with 21 points and four steals for Michigan (11-5, 2-3 Big Ten), which snapped a three-game losing streak.

Olivia Olson notched 18 points and seven rebounds.

Rashunda Jones scored 11 points off the bench to lead Purdue (7-9, 0-5), which has dropped four games in a row. Kendall Puryear added 10 points. The Boilermakers used the contest to spread around playing time, and 11 players who took the court entered the scoring column.

TENNIS AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Tsitsipas hopes 'home' Slam brings out his best

Shrivathsa Sridhar
REUTERS

MELBOURNE – Former Australian Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas hopes a return to his "home" Slam at Melbourne Park can spark an upturn in his fortunes after an inconsistent 2024 saw the Greek drop out of the top 10.

Tsitsipas won his third Masters title in Monte Carlo in April but other than that found success hard to come by, finishing the year ranked 11th.

Melbourne has the largest population of Greek speakers outside Greece and Cyprus and 2023 Australian Open finalist Tsitsipas is confident he will have huge support in his latest bid for a first Grand Slam title.

"I'm really glad to be back to Melbourne," he told reporters on Saturday.

"I can't wait to start the Australian Open, which I've said is my home Slam. It's a great opportunity to be playing on these courts, to be receiving the crowd support I have been receiving over the last few years.

"I just hope my tennis blends in well with the rest of the crowd and I'm going to be able to really perform at my highest level and bring that tennis I've shown in the last few years."

The 26-year-old former French Open runner-up said his game flourished when he was in his comfort zone.

"It makes a big difference in terms of feeling on court," Tsitsipas added.

"When I travel around the world and play in different places, I have seemed to be connecting more with the European kind of vibe. I haven't had great success in the U.S.

"Traveling so far overseas and having that feeling of home allows me to feel good within my comfort zone. That's also why my tennis thrives and I feel better with my game."

Tsitsipas plays American Alex Michelsen in his opener at the Australian Open, which begins on Sunday.

Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas hits a return during a practice session ahead of the Australian Open on Saturday in Melbourne. WILLIAM WEST/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

American Danielle Collins returns the ball against Slovakia's Rebecca Sramkova during a match at the Billie Jean King Cup on Nov. 14. GETTY IMAGES

Collins glad to be back after personal setbacks

Ian Ransom
REUTERS

MELBOURNE – Danielle Collins had no intention of being at this year's Australian Open but the former finalist is glad to be back at Melbourne Park and taking comfort in the routines of tennis after personal setbacks.

The American former world number seven had planned to retire at the end of 2024 to start a family but said in October she had changed her mind and would play on in 2025.

Collins, who suffers from endometriosis, said starting a family was proving more complicated than she hoped due to her health issues, paving the way for a return to the court.

"I was looking forward to trying to start a family right away and to start a new chapter," the 31-year-old told reporters at Melbourne Park on Saturday.

"But sometimes these things get thrown at you, different curve balls. Now it's just kind of like, well, I can enjoy some more time on tour, which is a bonus.

"It's been nice being back on tour and having, you know, the time to be around my friends on tour and having that support system."

Collins represented the United States for the season-opening mixed team United Cup tournament in Sydney and Perth, and will face Ukraine qualifier Daria Snigur in the first round of the Australian Open on Monday.

The 10th seed achieved her best result at a major when she reached the 2022 final, losing to the now-retired Ash Barty.

Collins said her return was less about unfinished business and more about her love of the game.

Tennis was a nice "distraction", she added, from her personal battles.

"I have been doing this for seven, eight years. My closest friendships are a lot of the women on tour, a lot of the people on tour," she added.

"You think about that lifestyle change when you're going through something that's so challenging emotionally, and then to not have that support system, that's ... Yeah, it's a lot.

"So I'm glad that I can keep doing this for a little bit longer."

TENNIS ROUNDUP

Keys captures crown at Adelaide International

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

Madison Keys overcame a left thigh injury to record a 6-3, 4-6, 6-1 win over top-seeded Jessica Pegula in an all-American final on Saturday at the Adelaide International in Australia

Keys captured her second Adelaide title in four years and ninth career WTA Tour championship after firing 10 aces and 36 winners to dispatch Pegula in one hour, 43 minutes.

The 29-year-old Keys hopes to ride this momentum into the Australian Open, where she will face Ann Li on Tuesday in the first round.

Pegula will look to rebound on Monday when she faces Australian Maya Joint in the first round in Melbourne.

Madison Keys celebrates winning the Adelaide International final against Jessica Pegula on Saturday in Australia. MARK BRAKE/GETTY IMAGES

Hobart International

Unseeded McCartney Kessler captured her second career WTA Tour title with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 win over No. 2 seed Elise Mertens of Belgium in Australia.

Kessler, who claimed her maiden title in Cleveland in August, fired three aces to defeat Mertens in two hours, eight minutes.

Kessler will look to continue her strong play in an Australian Open first-round match against China's Shuai Zhang.

Mertens will face Swiss qualifier Viktorija Golubic in the first round.

Men
ASB Classic

Gael Monfils became the oldest man in nearly five decades to win an ATP Tour-level title with his 6-3, 6-4 defeat of Zizou Bergs in Auckland, New Zealand.

Ken Rosewall, an Australian great, was 43 when he won the Hong Kong trophy in 1977. Monfils, who won his 13th tour title, is 38.

But against Bergs, Monfils seemed ageless, winning 88 percent of points on his first serve and saving six break chances in the 97-minute contest. Bergs, a 25-year-old Belgian, converted only 71 percent of his first serves into points.

Monfils and Bergs now move on to the Australian Open. Monfils drew fellow Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard as his first-round opponent, while Bergs will face Facundo Diaz Acosta of Argentina.

Adelaide International

No. 5 Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada won his sixth career title with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 defeat of No. 2 seed Sebastian Korda in Australia.

Auger-Aliassime used 10 aces in his win over Korda, who made his first tournament appearance since undergoing elbow surgery last October. In the final set, the Canadian won 93 percent (13 of 14) points on his first serve to close out the one-hour, 49-minute match. He won 17 of the final 21 points to win the first set.

Auger-Aliassime moved to 3-1 in his career against Korda. His next opponent will be Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany in the first round of the Australian Open on Monday. Auger-Aliassime is the No. 29 seed in the major.

Korda, seeded No. 22, will play Lukas Klein of Slovenia in the opener in Melbourne.

Patrick Fishburn hits his tee shot on the second hole during the third round of the Sony Open on Saturday at Waialae Country Club. KYLE TERADA/IMAGN IMAGES

Sony Open

Continued from Page 1

Spaun was clean for most of the day, scattering five birdies over the first 14 holes before alternating bogeys and birdies on the last four.

Fishburn began the round with two birdies, but played the back nine 2 over. He said conditions became tougher late in the round.

"A lot of the wind was hard off the left with pins on the left, so it was a tricky setup," Fishburn said.

Jaeger equaled the best round of his professional career.

"To shoot a great round and be in contention is nice," Jaeger said.

Spaun, Jaeger and Cole will be in the final grouping Sunday.

Keegan Bradley (64) Englishman Harry Hall (65) and Canadian Nick Taylor (65) are among a cluster of six golfers tied for fifth at 11 under. Bradley was the Sony Open runner-up last year.

Brian Harman (66) also is at 11 under. He was the only golfer in the field without a bogey or worse through 36 holes, a string that ended Saturday on the sixth hole. He had five birdies after that.

"I'm not going to change much," said Colombia's Nico Echavarria, who shot a 66 on Saturday and is in the mix at 11 under. "It's a course that has to be played in one way: you have to hit it from the fairway."

Denny McCarthy, who was even with Fishburn entering the round, slipped to a tie for 16th after shooting a 71. Japan's Kensei Hirata, who had a 63 for Friday's best round, is also in that group at 9 under after posting a 70 on Saturday.

There are 14 golfers within three shots of Spaun and 27 within five strokes of the top spot.

The past five editions of the Sony Open have been decided by one stroke or in a playoff. The late Grayson Murray was the 2024 champion in a playoff with Bradley and South Korea's Byeong Hun An.

SCOREBOARD

BETTING LINE

NFL

Sunday

FAVORITE	LINE	O/U	UNDERDOG
BUFFALO	8.5	47	Denver
PHILADELPHIA	5	45.5	Green Bay
TAMPA BAY	3	50	Washington

Monday

FAVORITE	LINE	O/U	UNDERDOG
Minnesota	2.5	47.5	LA RAMS

All times Eastern

NFL

Playoffs

Saturday's Games

Houston 32, L.A. Chargers 12
Baltimore 28, Pittsburgh 14

Sunday, Jan. 12

Denver at Buffalo, 1 p.m., CBS
Green Bay at Philadelphia, 4:30 p.m., Fox
Washington at Tampa Bay, 8 p.m., NBC

Monday, Jan. 13

Minnesota at L.A. Rams, 8 p.m., ESPN/ABC

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	27	11	.711	–
N.Y. Knicks	25	14	.641	2½
Philadelphia	15	21	.417	11
Brooklyn	13	25	.342	14
Toronto	8	31	.205	19½

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	22	18	.550	–
Miami	20	17	.541	½
Atlanta	19	19	.500	2
Charlotte	8	27	.229	11½
Washington	6	30	.167	14

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	33	4	.892	–
Milwaukee	20	16	.556	12½
Indiana	21	18	.538	13
Detroit	20	19	.513	14
Chicago	18	20	.474	15½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	25	12	.676	–
Memphis	25	14	.641	1
Dallas	22	16	.579	3½
San Antonio	18	19	.486	7
New Orleans	8	31	.205	18

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	31	6	.838	–
Denver	22	15	.595	9
Minnesota	20	18	.526	11½
Portland	13	25	.342	18½
Utah	9	28	.243	22

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	20	16	.556	–
L.A. Clippers	20	17	.541	½
Sacramento	19	19	.500	2
Golden State	19	19	.500	2
Phoenix	18	19	.486	2½

Friday's Scores

Indiana 108, Golden State 96
Milwaukee 109, Orlando 106
New Orleans 123, Philadelphia 115
Sacramento 114, Boston 97
Oklahoma City 126, N.Y. Knicks 101
Chicago 138, Washington 105
Denver 124, Brooklyn 105

Saturday's Scores

Houston at Atlanta, ppd.
Phoenix 114, Utah 106
Detroit 123, Toronto 114
Memphis 127, Minnesota 125
Miami 119, Portland 98
Charlotte at L.A. Clippers, ppd.
San Antonio at L.A. Lakers, ppd.

Sunday's Games

Denver at Dallas, 3 p.m.
Milwaukee at N.Y. Knicks, 3 p.m.
Sacramento at Chicago, 3:30 p.m.
New Orleans at Boston, 6 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Washington, 6 p.m.
Indiana at Cleveland, 6 p.m.
Philadelphia at Orlando, 6 p.m.
Brooklyn at Utah, 8 p.m.
Charlotte at Phoenix, 9 p.m.

Monday's Games

Minnesota at Washington, 7 p.m.
Golden State at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
Detroit at N.Y. Knicks, 7:30 p.m.
Memphis at Houston, 8 p.m.
Miami at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.
San Antonio at L.A. Lakers, 10:30 p.m.

Tuesday's Games

Cleveland at Indiana, 7 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Phoenix at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
New Orleans at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Sacramento at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Denver at Dallas, 9:30 p.m.
Brooklyn at Portland, 10 p.m.

Wednesday's Games

Boston at Toronto, 7:30 p.m.
N.Y. Knicks at Philadelphia, 7:30 p.m.
Atlanta at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Memphis at San Antonio, 8 p.m.
Dallas at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
Orlando at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Golden State at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Charlotte at Utah, 9 p.m.
Houston at Denver, 9 p.m.
Miami at L.A. Lakers, 10 p.m.
Brooklyn at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

League Leaders

Scoring Averages

	GP	PTS	AVG
Antetokounmpo, MIL	30	950	31.7
Jokic, DEN	32	1012	31.6
Gilgeous-Alexander, OKC	37	1165	31.5
Tatum, BOS	35	972	27.8
Durant, PHX	26	707	27.2
Fox, SAC	35	933	26.7
Davis, LAL	34	878	25.8
Edwards, MIN	37	950	25.7
Maxey, PHI	30	770	25.7
Towns, NYK	36	909	25.3
Wembanyama, SAS	32	804	25.1
Brunson, NYK	38	952	25.1
Lillard, MIL	29	723	24.9
Booker, PHX	31	757	24.4
Irving, DAL	30	729	24.3
Cunningham, DET	34	825	24.3
Brown, BOS	31	746	24.1
James, LAL	33	787	23.9
Powell, LAC	30	712	23.7
LaVine, CHI	33	780	23.6

Field-Goal Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Kessler, UTA	137	192	.714
Gafford, DAL	168	237	.709
Allen, CLE	216	306	.706
Gobert, MIN	144	232	.621
Zubac, LAC	247	402	.614
Poeltl, TOR	215	351	.613
Antetokounmpo, MIL	379	630	.602
Sabonis, SAC	286	481	.595
Jackson-Davis, GSW	142	241	.589
Capela, ATL	164	284	.577
Mobley, CLE	255	444	.574
Ayton, POR	182	320	.569
Hart, NYK	208	370	.562
Thompson, HOU	168	299	.562
Braun, DEN	191	342	.558
Vucevic, CHI	305	547	.558
Jokic, DEN	386	693	.557
Towns, NYK	327	592	.552
Valanciunas, WAS	175	319	.549
McConnell, IND	180	331	.544

Free-Throw Percentage

	FT	FTA	PCT
Curry, GSW	96	103	.932
Embiid, PHI	103	112	.920
Lillard, MIL	183	200	.915
Garland, CLE	107	117	.915
Simons, POR	81	89	.910
Murphy III, NOP	79	87	.908
Valanciunas, WAS	69	76	.908
Suggs, ORL	97	107	.907
Sexton, UTA	112	124	.903
Rozier, MIA	55	61	.902
Irving, DAL	98	109	.899
Johnson, BKN	111	124	.895
Dick, TOR	92	103	.893
Gilgeous-Alexander, OKC	259	290	.893
Booker, PHX	193	217	.889
Miller, CHA	63	71	.887
Monk, SAC	78	88	.886
Brogdon, WAS	62	70	.886
Bridges, CHA	69	78	.885
White, CHI	99	112	.884

3-Point Field-Goal Percentage

	3FG	3FGA	PCT
Jokic, DEN	72	150	.480
Kennard, MEM	51	111	.459
Sabonis, SAC	39	85	.459
Green, MIL	80	177	.452
Prince, MIL	60	133	.451
Towns, NYK	77	171	.450
LeVert, CLE	57	128	.445
LaVine, CHI	107	241	.444
Irving, DAL	93	211	.441
O'Neale, PHX	78	177	.441
Collins, UTA	39	89	.438
Powell, LAC	107	245	.437
Coffey, LAC	61	140	.436
Johnson, BKN	105	241	.436
Finney-Smith, LAL	55	127	.433
Hunter, ATL	74	171	.433
Garland, CLE	106	245	.433
Vucevic, CHI	77	178	.433
Battle, TOR	44	102	.431
Jones, PHX	78	181	.431

Rebounds Per Game

	GP	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Sabonis, SAC	35	138	359	497	14.2
Towns, NYK	36	109	391	500	13.9
Jokic, DEN	32	113	303	416	13.0
Zubac, LAC	37	140	324	464	12.5
Antetokounmpo, MIL	30	62	294	356	11.9
Davis, LAL	34	89	314	403	11.9
Kessler, UTA	30	128	213	341	11.4
Wembanyama, SAS	32	60	285	345	10.8
Gobert, MIN	37	128	267	395	10.7
Sengun, HOU	37	126	264	390	10.5
Poeltl, TOR	33	120	225	345	10.5
Allen, CLE	37	98	282	380	10.3
Johnson, ATL	32	59	266	325	10.2
Vucevic, CHI	37	84	291	375	10.1
Ayton, POR	28	81	202	283	10.1
Adebayo, MIA	36	85	266	351	9.8
Duren, DET	35	112	218	330	9.4
Tatum, BOS	35	213	305	326	9.3
Hart, NYK	38	79	271	350	9.2
Capela, ATL	38	125	215	340	9.0

Assists Per Game

	GP	AST	AVG
Young, ATL	36	434	12.1
Jokic, DEN	32	316	9.9
Cunningham, DET	34	316	9.3
Haliburton, IND	39	348	8.9
James, LAL	33	292	8.9
Paul, SAS	37	308	8.3
Harden, LAC	35	275	7.9
Brunson, NYK	38	285	7.5
Lillard, MIL	29	213	7.3
Booker, PHX	31	216	7.0
Simmons, BKN	27	186	6.9
Westbrook, DEN	37	250	6.8
Garland, CLE	36	242	6.7
Giddey, CHI	34	228	6.7
Sabonis, SAC	35	217	6.2
Fox, SAC	35	216	6.2
Murray, DEN	31	191	6.2
Antetokounmpo, MIL	30	183	6.1
Curry, GSW	30	182	6.1
Jones, PHX	35	211	6.0

Steals Per Game

	GP	STL	AVG
Daniels, ATL	34	106	3.12
Maxey, PHI	30	61	2.03
Gilgeous-Alexander, OKC	37	73	1.97
Williams, OKC	37	66	1.78
Jokic, DEN	32	57	1.78
Wallace, OKC	36	63	1.75
Westbrook, DEN	37	61	1.65
VanVleet, HOU	35	57	1.63
Fox, SAC	35	57	1.63
Caldwell-Pope, ORL	39	63	1.62
Dunn, LAC	37	59	1.59
Poole, WAS	29	46	1.59
Murray, DEN	31	49	1.58
Adebayo, MIA	36	56	1.56
Johnson, ATL	32	48	1.50
Jackson Jr., MEM	36	54	1.50
Hart, NYK	38	56	1.47
Suggs, ORL	34	50	1.47
Harden, LAC	35	51	1.46
Mitchell, CLE	35	50	1.43

Blocks Per Game

	GP	BLK	Avg.
Wembanyama, SAS	32	127	3.97
Kessler, UTA	30	76	2.53
Davis, LAL	34	73	2.15
Turner, IND	36	76	2.11
Lopez, MIL	36	69	1.92
Jackson Jr., MEM	36	63	1.75
Lively II, DAL	30	52	1.73
Bitadze, ORL	35	57	1.63
Clingan, POR	29	45	1.55
Sarr, WAS	32	49	1.53
Gobert, MIN	37	55	1.49
Missi, NOP	38	56	1.47
Antetokounmpo, MIL	30	44	1.47
Mobley, CLE	35	51	1.46
Gafford, DAL	36	52	1.44
Durant, PHX	26	35	1.35
Isaac, ORL	34	45	1.32
Stewart, DET	34	45	1.32
White, BOS	36	45	1.25
Poeltl, TOR	33	41	1.24

NHL

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	27	15	2	56	135	124
Florida	25	15	3	53	143	132
Tampa Bay	22	15	3	47	146	111
Boston	21	19	5	47	116	142
Montreal	20	18	4	44	126	140
Ottawa	20	18	3	43	119	118
Detroit	19	18	4	42	115	131
Buffalo	16	22	5	37	132	146

Metropolitan Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	28	10	5	61	156	113
New Jersey	26	15	4	56	142	114
Carolina	26	15	2	54	145	120
Columbus	20	17	6	46	149	151
Pittsburgh	18	18	8	44	133	164
N.Y. Rangers	20	20	2	42	122	131
N.Y. Islanders	17	18	7	41	114	129
Philadelphia	18	20	5	41	132	151

Western Conference

Central Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	29	12	3	61	156	108
Minnesota	27	12	4	58	131	118
Dallas	27	13	1	55	134	101
Colorado	26	17	1	53	147	138
St. Louis	20	20	4	44	125	133
Utah	18	17	7	43	117	125
Nashville	13	22	7	33	101	132
Chicago	14	27	2	30	111	147

Pacific Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	28	11	3	59	144	113
Edmonton	26	13	3	55	139	117
L.A. Kings	24	11	5	53	121	99
Vancouver	19	13	10	48	124	130
Calgary	20	14	7	47	110	123
Anaheim	17	20	5	39	105	133
Seattle	18	22	3	39	126	138
San Jose	13	26	6	32	114	158

NOTE: Two points for a win, one for OT loss.

Friday's Scores

Detroit 5, Chicago 3
Montreal 3, Washington 2, OT
Carolina 2, Vancouver 0
L.A. Kings 2, Winnipeg 1, OT
Utah 2, San Jose 1

Saturday's Scores

Boston 4, Florida 3, OT
Seattle 6, Buffalo 2
Ottawa 5, Pittsburgh 0
Vancouver 3, Toronto 0
Dallas 2, Montreal 1, SO
New Jersey 3, Tampa Bay 2, OT
Philadelphia 6, Anaheim 0
Edmonton 4, Chicago 3
Columbus 2, St. Louis 1
Winnipeg 3, Colorado 0
Washington 4, Nashville 1
N.Y. Islanders 2, Utah 1
Calgary 2, L.A. Kings 1
N.Y. Rangers 2, Vegas 1
Minnesota 3, San Jose 1

Sunday's Games

Seattle at Detroit, 3 p.m.
Dallas at Ottawa, 5 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh, 5 p.m.
Anaheim at Carolina, 5 p.m.
Minnesota at Vegas, 8 p.m.

Monday's Games

Florida at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Calgary at Chicago, 7:30 p.m.
L.A. Kings at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

Tuesday's Games

Tampa Bay at Boston, 7 p.m.
Dallas at Toronto, 7 p.m.
San Jose at Detroit, 7 p.m.
Seattle at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Anaheim at Washington, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Florida at New Jersey, 7:30 p.m.
Ottawa at N.Y. Islanders, 7:30 p.m.
Calgary at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Vegas at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Vancouver at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Montreal at Utah, 9 p.m.

League Leaders

Goal Scoring

Name	Team	GP	G
Leon Draisaitl	Edmonton	41	31
Brayden Point	Tampa Bay	35	25
Mikko Rantanen	Colorado	43	25
William Nylander	Toronto	43	24
Kyle Connor	Winnipeg	42	23
Kirill Kaprizov	Minnesota	34	23
Sam Reinhart	Florida	42	23
Mark Scheifele	Winnipeg	42	23
Cole Caufield	Montreal	40	22
Jake Guentzel	Tampa Bay	38	21
Rickard Rakell	Pittsburgh	43	21
Travis Konecny	Philadelphia	42	20
John Tavares	Toronto	42	20
Brandon Hagel	Tampa Bay	39	19
Roope Hintz	Dallas	39	19
Nico Hischier	New Jersey	44	19
Adrian Kempe	L.A. Kings	38	19
Jordan Kyrou	St. Louis	43	19
Anders Lee	N.Y. Islanders	41	19
Alex Ovechkin	Washington	25	19

Assists

Name	Team	GP	A
Nathan MacKinnon	Colorado	43	53
Mitch Marner	Toronto	43	45
Jack Eichel	Vegas	41	42
Connor McDavid	Edmonton	38	42
Nikita Kucherov	Tampa Bay	37	41
Quinn Hughes	Vancouver	36	37
Cale Makar	Colorado	43	36
Sidney Crosby	Pittsburgh	43	35
Mikko Rantanen	Colorado	43	35
Zach Werenski	Columbus	42	35
Jesper Bratt	New Jersey	44	34
Jack Hughes	New Jersey	44	34
Josh Morrissey	Winnipeg	42	33
Martin Necas	Carolina	42	33
Dylan Strome	Washington	41	33
Adam Fox	N.Y. Rangers	41	31
Sebastian Aho	Carolina	42	30
Kyle Connor	Winnipeg	42	30
Leon Draisaitl	Edmonton	41	30
Tim Stuetzle	Ottawa	40	29

Power Play Goals

Name	Team	GP	PP
Brayden Point	Tampa Bay	35	12
Gabriel Vilardi	Winnipeg	42	10
Kyle Connor	Winnipeg	42	9
Jake Guentzel	Tampa Bay	38	9
Dylan Larkin	Detroit	40	9
Brady Tkachuk	Ottawa	40	9
Michael Bunting	Pittsburgh	42	8
Travis Konecny	Philadelphia	42	8
Patrik Laine	Montreal	13	8
Mikko Rantanen	Colorado	43	8
Sam Reinhart	Florida	42	8
Andrei Svechnikov	Carolina	42	8
Matthew Tkachuk	Florida	37	8
Tom Wilson	Washington	41	8
Jason Zucker	Buffalo	42	8
Drake Batherson	Ottawa	40	7
Cole Caufield	Montreal	40	7
Alex DeBrincat	Detroit	40	7
Jake DeBrusk	Vancouver	40	7
Leon Draisaitl	Edmonton	41	7

Shorthanded Goals

Name	Team	GP	SH
Sam Reinhart	Florida	42	4
Anthony Cirelli	Tampa Bay	38	3
Jake Evans	Montreal	40	3
Alex Tuch	Buffalo	42	3
Morgan Barron	Winnipeg	42	2
Brandon Hagel	Tampa Bay	39	2
Chris Kreider	N.Y. Rangers	34	2
Brock Nelson	N.Y. Islanders	41	2
Jordan Staal	Carolina	42	2
Yakov Trenin	Minnesota	37	2
Sebastian Aho	Carolina	42	1
Joel Armia	Montreal	40	1
Aleksander Barkov	Florida	32	1
Nathan Bastian	New Jersey	26	1
Colin Blackwell	Dallas	35	1
Jesper Boqvist	Florida	39	1
Jesper Bratt	New Jersey	44	1
Connor Brown	Edmonton	41	1
Kyle Connor	Winnipeg	42	1
Will Cuylle	N.Y. Rangers	41	1

Power Play Assists

Name	Team	GP	PPA
Nikita Kucherov	Tampa Bay	37	22
Quinn Hughes	Vancouver	36	17
Nathan MacKinnon	Colorado	43	17
Mitch Marner	Toronto	43	17
Lucas Raymond	Detroit	40	17
Jack Hughes	New Jersey	44	16
Jesper Bratt	New Jersey	44	15
Josh Morrissey	Winnipeg	42	15
Dylan Strome	Washington	41	15
Jack Eichel	Vegas	41	14
Shayne Gostisbehere	Carolina	35	14
Cale Makar	Colorado	43	14
Tim Stuetzle	Ottawa	40	14
Zach Werenski	Columbus	42	14
Sebastian Aho	Carolina	42	13
Connor Bedard	Chicago	41	13
Adam Fox	N.Y. Rangers	41	13
Lane Hutson	Montreal	40	13
Kirill Marchenko	Columbus	42	13
Martin Necas	Carolina	42	13

Shorthanded Assists

Name	Team	GP	SHA
Aleksander Barkov	Florida	32	3
Brandon Hagel	Tampa Bay	39	3
Erik Cernak	Tampa Bay	37	2
Anthony Cirelli	Tampa Bay	38	2
Aaron Ekblad	Florida	41	2
Mattias Janmark	Edmonton	41	2
Adam Lowry	Winnipeg	42	2
Sean Monahan	Columbus	41	2
Alex Pietrangelo	Vegas	38	2
Jake Sanderson	Ottawa	40	2
Noel Acciari	Pittsburgh	43	1
Sebastian Aho	Carolina	42	1
Oskar Back	Dallas	35	1
Jonas Brodin	Minnesota	31	1
Connor Brown	Edmonton	41	1
Pavel Buchnevich	St. Louis	41	1
Sam Carrick	N.Y. Rangers	41	1
Alexandre Carrier	Nashville	37	1
Alexandre Carrier	Montreal	37	1
Blake Coleman	Calgary	40	1

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

College Football Playoff Matchups

Semifinals

Thursday

Capital One Orange Bowl

Notre Dame 27, Penn State 24

Friday

Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic

Ohio State 28, Texas 14

Monday, Jan. 20

CFP National Championship

Notre Dame vs Ohio State at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Saturday's Men's Scores

East

Yale 79, Brown 58
Duke 86, Notre Dame 78
Louisville 82, Pittsburgh 78
La Salle 83, St. Bonaventure 82
Hofstra 66, UNCW 63
Monmouth 84, Charleston 73
App State 86, James Madison 66
New Hampshire 79, Binghamton 72
UMass Lowell 70, NJIT 62
Lafayette 82, Holy Cross 65
Princeton 68, Harvard 64
Hampton 83, Delaware 77
Towson 93, Drexel 82
William & Mary 81, North Carolina A&T 78
Cornell 94, Columbia 83
Maine 87, Albany 66
George Mason 77, Massachusetts 70
UConn 68, Georgetown 60
Dartmouth 73, Penn 70
Davidson 74, Fordham 64
Army West Point 74, Lehigh 69
Colgate 87, Boston University 50
Syracuse 79, Boston College 71
Saint Joseph's 93, Loyola Chicago 57
Marshall 81, Georgia Southern 69
American University 68, Bucknell 58
North Carolina 63, North Carolina State 61
Bryant 73, Vermont 53
Howard 100, Morgan State 95
Norfolk State 92, Coppin State 69
Loyola Maryland 75, Navy 74
Providence 91, Seton Hall 85
North Carolina Central 88, Maryland Eastern Shore 69

Southeast

Auburn 66, South Carolina 63
FGCU 77, Central Arkansas 71
Northwestern State 75, East Texas A&M 67
Clemson 77, Florida State 57
Memphis 74, East Carolina 70
Tulane 73, South Florida 70
UNC Asheville 96, Presbyterian 87
Winthrop 95, Longwood 76
Radford 80, USC Upstate 67
Old Dominion 71, South Alabama 63
Western Kentucky 85, Kennesaw State 69
Southern Miss 92, Texas State 88
North Alabama 92, Stetson 64
Jacksonville 82, Eastern Kentucky 75
East Tennessee State 70, Citadel 52
Georgia State 79, Coastal Carolina 74
Murray State 58, Valparaiso 47
Florida 71, Arkansas 63
Jackson State 77, Alabama State 70
Arkansas State 84, Troy 78
Delaware State 76, South Carolina State 75
Alcorn State 62, Alabama A&M 52
Queens University 67, Austin Peay 60
Lipscomb 86, West Georgia 67
McNeese State 80, Nicholls 71
Wake Forest 88, Miami (FL) 78
Bethune-Cookman 65, Grambling State 59
Southeastern Louisiana 91, New Orleans 71
Samford 76, UNCG 69
Middle Tennessee 81, Jacksonville State 64

Midwest

USC 82, Illinois 72
Creighton 80, Butler 76
Ohio 108, Northern Illinois 70
Belmont 84, Indiana State 79
Cleveland State 80, Youngstown State 72
Ball State 91, Bowling Green 69
Kansas 54, Cincinnati 40
Omaha 87, South Dakota State 80
Bradley 61, UIC 60
Akron 105, Eastern Michigan 81
Miami (OH) 91, Western Michigan 71
Missouri 75, Vanderbilt 66
Milwaukee 70, Green Bay 59
Xavier 77, DePaul 63
Lindenwood 82, UT Martin 81
Tennessee State 72, Western Illinois 52
SIUE 67, Tennessee Tech 59
Morehead State 67, Southeast Missouri State 56

West

New Mexico 62, San Diego State 48
TCU 71, BYU 67
Iowa State 85, Texas Tech 84
Temple 73, Rice 70
North Dakota State 69, Denver 50
San Jose State 69, Air Force 62
Sam Houston 81, FIU 74
Eastern Washington 65, Sacramento State 54
Hawaii 95, Cal State Fullerton 86
UTSA 88, Wichita State 75
Stanford 88, Virginia 65
Colorado State 84, UNLV 62
Utah Valley 75, California Baptist 69
SMU 93, Georgia Tech 71
Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 79, UT Rio Grande Valley 74
Houston Christian 81, UIW 76
Portland State 75, Idaho 63
Long Beach State 84, UC Davis 73
Tennessee 74, Texas 70

USA TODAY Sports Coaches Poll

Jan. 6

The USA TODAY Sports Men's Basketball Coaches Poll is conducted weekly throughout the regular season using a panel of head coaches at Division I schools. The panel is chosen in consultation with the National Association of Basketball Coaches. The voters represent each of the 32 Division I conferences that receive an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. Each coach submits a Top 25 with a first-place vote worth 25 points, second place 24, and so on down to one point for 25th, with first-place votes in parenthesis.

	Record	Pts	Prv.
1. Tennessee (21)	14-0	765	1
2. Auburn (10)	13-1	749	2
3. Iowa State	12-1	711	3
4. Duke	12-2	670	4
5. Alabama	12-2	651	6
6. Marquette	13-2	581	8
7. Kentucky	12-2	560	11
8. Florida	13-1	529	5
9. Texas A&M	12-2	488	12
10. UConn	12-3	461	13
11. Houston	10-3	454	14
12. Kansas	10-3	438	7
13. Mississippi St.	13-1	372	16
14. Michigan St.	12-2	350	15
15. Illinois	11-3	300	20
16. Oklahoma	13-1	287	10
17. Oregon	13-2	284	9
18. Gonzaga	12-4	246	19
19. Purdue	11-4	228	22
20. Memphis	12-3	192	25
21. UCLA	11-3	147	18
22. Ole Miss	12-2	119	23
23. West Virginia	11-2	110	NR
24. Michigan	11-3	98	NR
25. Utah State	14-1	73	NR

Others receiving votes: Baylor 49; Cincinnati 38; Pittsburgh 32; San Diego State 25; St. John's 24; Clemson 10; Maryland 9; Georgia 5; Nebraska 4; Arizona 4; Wisconsin 3; Vanderbilt 3; Indiana 3; UC San Diego 1; Texas Tech 1; Arkansas 1.

USA TODAY Sports Women's Coaches Poll

Jan. 7

The USA TODAY Sports women's basketball coaches poll is conducted weekly throughout the regular season using a panel of head coaches at Division I schools. The panel is chosen by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. The members represent each of the 32 Division I conferences that receive an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. Each coach submits a Top 25 with a first-place vote worth 25 points, second place 24, and so on down to one point for 25th, with first-place votes in parenthesis.

	Record	Pts	Prv.
1. UCLA (31)	15-0	775	1
2. S. Carolina	14-1	741	2
3. Notre Dame	12-2	694	3
4. LSU	17-0	659	4
5. USC	14-1	654	5
6. Texas	15-1	630	6
7. Maryland	14-0	590	7
8. UConn	13-2	550	8
9. Ohio State	14-0	534	9
10. Kansas St.	15-1	480	11
11. Oklahoma	13-2	448	10
12. TCU	15-1	444	12
13. Georgia Tech	15-0	405	14
14. Duke	12-3	347	15
15. Tennessee	13-1	341	13
16. Kentucky	13-1	317	16
17. West Virginia	12-2	263	18
18. N. Carolina	13-3	230	17
19. NC State	11-3	215	19
19. Alabama	15-1	215	20
21. Michigan St.	12-2	163	21
22. Utah	12-2	86	NR
23. Iowa	12-3	82	22
24. Florida St.	13-2	58	NR
25. California	14-2	43	23

Others receiving votes: Baylor 34; Ole Miss 20; Vanderbilt 16; Minnesota 11; Michigan 9; Saint Joseph's 8; South Dakota State 5; Harvard 2; Creighton 2; Seton Hall 1; Nebraska 1; George Mason 1; FGCU 1.

GOLF

Sony Open in Hawaii
Saturday
Honolulu
Waialae Country Club
Purse: $8.7 million
Yardage: 7,044; Par: 70
Third Round

J.J. Spaun ....66-66-65–197 (-13)
Eric Cole....64-67-67–198 (-12)
Patrick Fishburn ....65-65-68–198 (-12)
Stephan Jaeger....68-68-62–198 (-12)
Keegan Bradley ....69-66-64–199 (-11)
Nico Echavarria ....66-67-66–199 (-11)
Harry Hall....64-70-65–199 (-11)
Brian Harman 66-67-